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DIAGRAMS

JUAN ROGEL, S. J.

A

TYPICAL JESUIT

OF

COLONIAL HISPANIC AMERICA

Rosemary Ring Griffin

During his long convalescence Ignatius was converted to a religious life, and when restored to health he devoted his military energy to the establishment of the Society of Jesus, which was approved formally by Pope Paul III in the year 1540, and within a few years its members were conducting schools and missions in every corner of the world.

In the year 1529, midway between the battle of Pamplona and the foundation of the Company of Jesus, a baby boy was born into the Regel family of Pamplona and was named Juan. He was by birth and surroundings heir to the Basque traditions of valor, chivalry, cheerfulness and Catholicity, and it is the life work of this boy that we shall attempt to trace. No biographer has left an account of Juan's early years in the mountain town of Navarre and considerable research would be necessary to discover just what occurred in that delightful place during the boy's formative years; how the city and its inhabitants were affected by the great changes which were taking place in Europe. Undoubtedly the wars of Charles, the king and emperor, were discussed, and there must have been whispers at least of the revolt of Luther and the marital difficulties of Henry VIII. It is safe to surmise that tales of the conquest of America and of the wonders of the New World found their way into the north of Spain, and it is likely, too, that the fear of the European menace, - the Turk, - was felt in this distant village, so far from the Eastern scene of the efforts of Suleiman, "The Magnificent." But what effect all this had on Juan cannot be told. He was probably

subject to the same hopes, fears and ambitions as his schoolmates with whom he studied until he was eighteen years old.¹

In 1547 Juan Rogel, together with 1938 other students, enrolled in Alcalá, one of the leading universities of Spain, rivalled as an institution of learning only by Salamanca.² Alcalá, following the desire of its founder, Cardinal Ximénez, had become the recognized center of humanistic studies. In its halls assembled renowned students of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and other ancient languages.³ Although there were in the sixteenth century twenty-nine universities in Spain, Alcalá was the leader in scientific studies, as well as in the humanities. Its professorial chairs numbered forty-two.⁴ In such a place of learning Juan Rogel passed his youth and was rewarded with a Licentiate in Arts. He became part of Spanish intellectual life at a time when Spain was enjoying its golden age in literature and in science as well as in the fine arts. In fact, the scholars of Spain during this century shed brilliant rays of learning on all parts of Europe dominating, to a great extent, European thought.

¹Michael Kenny, S. J., The Romance of the Floridas (Milwaukee, 1934), p. 172. This will be cited hereinafter as Kenny.

²Charles E. Chapman, A History of Spain (New York, 1930), p. 340.

³Ibid., p. 230.

⁴Ibid., p. 340.

⁵Kenny, p. 172.

Juan Rogel, however, was not destined to diffuse the learning obtained at his alma mater to other parts of the continent. He was destined to contribute his share to the progress of Spanish Christian civilization in America. For such a mission his training was adequate. After gaining a thorough knowledge of the classics and philology he turned his attention to the mysteries of medicine and after due study he became a Bachelor of that science. But it so happened that the University of Valencia had taken the lead in the field of medicine, so Juan betook himself to that institution in order to continue his study in anatomy.⁵

But the budding scientist was not destined to continue his study of the human body. To him, theology became more engrossing, and he made up his mind definitely to join the priesthood, - to become a physician of souls. Therefore he decided to study canon law, scripture, and dogmatic theology at Valencia. He had been born and had lived among the scenes which had witnessed the turning point in the life of Ignatius Loyola, and he had followed the Soldier Saint to the halls of Alcala, where the founder of the Jesuits at the age of thirty-one had sat learning declensions with small boys. If Rogel had not heard of his saintly predecessor, he was soon to hear of the new Company of Jesus that Ignatius had founded. Its fame by the year 1534 was widespread in Europe. Its scholars had already dispersed to

⁵Kenny, p. 172.

many universities for purposes of lecturing and some were engaged in the theological sessions of the Council of Trent. Jesuit colleges were beginning to dot the lands of Europe, India, and even Brazil.

The first of the Jesuits arrived in Valencia, Spain, as missionaries in 1534.⁶ Immediately there was talk among the citizens of establishing a college under the supervision of the Society. A young Jesuit, Father Jerome Domenech, the son of a rich citizen of Valencia, persuaded his father to appropriate some of his wealth for this purpose.⁷ It was a big undertaking, yet within ten years the funds were available, and Ignatius Loyola sent teachers from his headquarters in Rome for the purpose of opening the college. And thus the oldest college establishment of the Jesuits in Spain was in operation by October, 1544. Almost immediately afterwards the Duke of Gandia, Francis Borgia, who was to play such an important part in the life of Juan Rogel, conceived a similar idea for a college at Gandia. These two colleges at first were halls for young Jesuit students who attended lectures and classes at the adjacent universities, but shortly after this time they became independent colleges open to students of the classics and philosophy,⁸ even though they

⁶Antonio Astrain, Historia de la Compania de Jesus, en la Asistencia de España (Madrid, 1912), I, 240. This will be cited hereinafter as Astrain.

⁷Ibid., I, 268.

⁸Ibid., I, 275.

were not Jesuits. Francis Borgia, the founder of Gandia college, renounced his title and his lands to enter the Society of Jesus, becoming in time its general. Juan Rogel while studying at the University of Valencia came into contact with some of the Jesuits at the newly founded college and was inspired by them to give up his study of medicine and enter the Society.

A novitiate for the training of young Jesuits had been established at Gandia and Juan Rogel applied for admission to the training school. He was accepted as a candidate of the Company of Jesus and was sent to Gandia to serve his term of probation before being permitted to take the vows of the Society. Since this was to be a complete break with the old life and the beginning of a new career for Juan it is reasonable to suppose that he returned to say farewell to his relatives and friends in Pamplona, yet there is no proof extant to show that he made the journey to his mountain home. At the age of twenty-five Juan Rogel entered the novitiate and commenced his spectacular service as a missionary teacher.

The Jesuits were given a very strict period of training which lasted generally about two years. Juan Rogel was trained along with the other young men who had recently entered the house of probation in a way which was novel for those times. Among the young men living in the same cramped quarters with him was one who was to become more famous than Rogel but who was several

years his junior, Pedro Martínez,⁹ the future martyr of the Floridas. Much has been written about the tragic death of this early leader of the Jesuits in the New World, while Rogel has been neglected, even though he contributed far more to the cause of religion and education than his former fellow novice. Moreover, Rogel has left a far greater number of historical documents for the enlightenment of historians of the generations that followed him, as will become clear in the pages to follow. Martínez and Rogel were young men of different character, yet both were trained together in the same difficult school of the Jesuit novitiate. What each one did from day to day during the long months of probation cannot be told from any extant diaries, but a reconstruction of the method of their training can be made with a great deal of certainty.

The novitiate was a most important period for the Jesuits.¹⁰ It was during this time that each young member of the Company learned how to live the religious life. The Jesuits being a new order, organized in a different time and under different circumstances from those of the Franciscans, Benedictines, and Dominicans, had different rules and a different manner of

⁹For an account of Martínez, consult Kenny, p. 161 ff.; John Tate Lanning, Spanish Mission of Georgia (Chapel Hill, 1935); Woodbury Lowery, Spanish Settlements Within the Present Limits of the United States, 1582-1674 (New York, 1905). These authorities will be cited hereinafter as Lanning and Lowery.

¹⁰Jerome V. Jacobsen, The Educational Foundations of the Jesuits in New Spain (in press), MS, p. 26 ff., for description of Jesuit novitiate. This will be cited hereinafter as Jacobsen.

life. They were not bound to be preachers only, or pastors only, or recluses. They were to serve or at least be ready to serve in any and all religious capacities, as preachers, lecturers, pastors, teachers in schools, and as missionaries. Therefore, it was necessary for them to spend a long time in preparation. Their spirit was militant. Like soldiers, they were to be obedient to commands, not through fear of punishment but through love of their Creator. They must prepare their minds to go willingly wherever they were ordered by their superiors, to any place and to any work.

Like all novices to the Society, Rogel undoubtedly had to go through a retreat of thirty days. This retreat was called making the Spiritual Exercises. It consisted of pondering over a series of meditations written by Ignatius on the great truths of life, death and eternity. This meditation process changed the student's whole outlook on life, so that he would do all things to save his own soul and that of his neighbor. The ideal Jesuit was a man living in the world who did not act according to the principles of a man of the world. The retreat was made in silence and seclusion under the direction of a retreat master, who explained the ideals and then allowed the young men making the retreat to meditate upon them by the hour. When the thirty days were over, the novice was assigned various duties for the purpose of putting the ideals and principles he had learned into practice, thus making them his guides and rules for life.

There were a number of regulations pertaining to every hour and occupation of the day. With the others Rogel had to arise at an early hour and then spend some time in meditation and hearing Mass. During the course of the day some periods were set aside for prayer and others were devoted to work around the house. He probably had to take care of his own room and clothing. There was work to be done in the kitchen by the novices, such as washing dishes or helping the cook. Some of the novices were sent at times to help in the hospitals, where they were ordered about by the overseers of the institution. Sometimes they had to go to the prison to instruct the unfortunates in catechism. Sometimes they were sent out into the streets to beg from door to door for food or lodging. Sometimes novices were appointed to teach children religion and to prepare them for their first Communion. During the day there were instructions to be heard concerning the rules of the Society, and there were hours devoted to study. At all times the novices were supposed to remain silent except after lunch and dinner when they were permitted some recreation, but conversation, even during these recesses, was supposed to be in Latin.¹¹ Both Juan Rogel and Pedro Martínez submitted to this rigorous day by day routine of training. Their defects of character and their violations of the rules, if such there were, were pointed out to them at times by the superior or by the master of the novices, and sometimes probably by their

¹¹Jacobsen, pp. 28-29.

fellows, but all corrections were made with kindness.

When these particular trials were finished in an approved fashion, and when it was found that Rogel was a satisfactory candidate, humble, obedient and cheerful, he was allowed to take the three cardinal vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The religious members of all orders took these vows, while the secular clergy made only the vows of chastity and obedience. We may suppose that both Rogel and Martínez measured up to the standard, or the Jesuits would not have permitted them to enter the Society after their probation. Their saintly lives proved that both had taken well to the training. It was said that Rogel labored under some impediment of speech but just what, was not stated.¹² It is also implied that since he had "no special gift for languages," he might not have a great intellect.¹³ It must be remembered, however, that in this criticism he was being compared to some of the greatest minds of the greatest intellectual age of Spain, and any ordinary student would suffer from such a comparison. Rogel had sufficient qualities of character and mind to be admitted to the ranks of a select group of scholars and saintly men, and with this consideration it may be concluded that his talents were quite sufficient.

¹²Kenny, p. 172.

¹³Ibid. Father Kenny quotes some writer but does not give his name nor his work.

Having decided to remain forever as a member of the Society of Jesus, and having made his vows to that effect Rogel now was destined to begin his actual studies in preparation for ordination to the priesthood and for his ensuing life as a teacher or missionary father. These studies usually took a long time, for they were studies of the classical authors, of philosophy and of theology. During the time of study prior to ordination the Jesuit was known as a scholastic. But Rogel has already taken his degree in arts and philosophy and had finished some of the theological studies, hence, instead of spending some eleven years as was the custom in preparation for his final examinations, he apparently completed his whole course, including that of the novitiate, between the years 1554 and 1560, because at the latter date, when he was thirty-one, he was a pastor of a church in Toledo. Certainly he had finished his studies earlier than was the custom afterwards with the Jesuits. Little is known about Juan Rogel's life as a student of theology, except that he completed his courses at Guenza.¹⁴ We may presume that his intellectual life was of the usual type in that place and that he heard lectures on the Scriptures, moral theology, dogmatic theology, and canon law, and that he passed an examination in each of these. Meantime he was following the routine life of a Jesuit of those times, living in a community with the hours of his day prescribed for study, recreation and for class.¹⁵

¹⁴Kenny, p. 172.

¹⁵For an account of this routine consult Jacobsen, Chapter 2.

CHAPTER II

PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY

While attending to his pastoral charge in Toledo,¹ Juan developed an intense desire to serve in the foreign missions. Repeatedly he petitioned Francis Borgia, Commissioner of the Jesuits in Spain, for an assignment to the mission field. At this time the Society had missions all over the world except in North America, and the following letters seem to indicate that Rogel preferred service in India:

To the General of the Jesuits, Father James Lainez, IHS.

Our Very Reverend Father in Christ:

The Peace of Christ.

Because I have understood that your paternity is concerned in knowing when the Lord communicates any desires for the Indies to some particular subject, I have set myself to writing this in order to tell Your Paternity that from the very time I entered the Company, the Lord has given me such desires, and I have written about them to Father Francisco,² and they tell me also that already His Reverence has me in mind for the Indies of Spain.

And now I turn to write to Your Paternity in order to do on my part that which is in me, and to satisfy myself in the matter.

What moves me to this desire seems to me to be a wish to suffer what the Lord wills, (that is) if I am not deceived or am not bringing myself to my own (will). Such talent as

¹Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, Epistolae Nadal (Madrid, 1894), I, 389.

²St. Francis Borgia who was in charge of sending men to foreign lands.

I have, certainly is not (sufficient) for such an enterprise, because it is exceedingly little; but it consoles me much that God selects the weak and contemptible of this world to confound the mighty.

My service until now in the Company has consisted of hearing confessions and teaching the Christian doctrine. I have no talent for preaching, for I stutter and have very little learning for it, since before I entered the Company I studied medicine, and after entering it, I have studied very little theology.

I give this account to Your Paternity (to indicate) that if perchance I am (destined) for (India) and if Your Paternity judges in the Lord that I go, "behold I am ready!" It is well that Your Paternity should know another particular also, namely, that I am in good bodily health, glory to God, and I have borne well until now the labor of being in the confessional, even all day long and many days one after another. And if Your Paternity wishes to inquire more in particular about me, Father Lucio Grudic knows me from Gandia and Valencia, from before I entered the Company and after I entered it.

Another charity and privilege I want to ask of Your Paternity for myself and for another father, also a medic, who lives in this house and who is called Father Segura, and it is the privilege that Your Paternity grants to some fathers of the Company to save from Purgatory one soul with each Mass they say, even though they do not apply the Mass to that (particular) soul which they liberate. I well know that I deserve no such kindness, but confidence in the charity and benignity of Your Paternity has drawn me to ask it. And because I have nothing else to write I stop. May our Lord grant Your Paternity His divine love and grace to know and comply with His Divine Will in all things and in increasing in Your Paternity His divine gifts, as all your sons and I, the least of all, desire.

From Toledo, the 20th of August of 1560.

From Your Paternity's most unworthy son and servant in the Lord,

Juan Rogel.³

³Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesus, Epistolae Lainez (Madrid, 1894), V, 192-194.

The General kept this application in mind, and when toward the end of the same year there were requests for Jesuits to go to India and Ethiopia, he referred the requests to Father Nadal and mentioned that the Province of Portugal could take care of them, but he added:

However there are three good men in Castile who have requested to be sent to India. I think your reverence spoke of one who is in Toledo, Fr. Juan Rogel; the other was sent from Toledo to Cuenca, who is called Fr. Martínez and who preaches there, the other is Father León⁴

Nadal replied to the general that he was not able to send Rogel, Martínez and León because the fleet was due to sail before it was possible to get them together and prepare them for such a trip.⁵

Much disappointed, Rogel kept asking to be sent to India with such persistence that the Provincial of Portugal wrote from Lisbon on November 12, 1563, to the general saying, "This Father Rogel has an insatiable desire to go to the Indies For the love of our Lord, Your Paternity, satisfy him if it is possible, since without a doubt I have never in my life witnessed such a longing for India."⁶

It was not until 1566 that Rogel's desire to aid in the salvation of heathen mankind was gratified and even then his

⁴Monumenta Historica, Epistolae Nadal, I, 367.

⁵Ibid., I, 409.

⁶Ibid., Epistolae Lainez, VII, 487.

apostolic expedition was not to be to India as he had hoped, but to ancient Florida within the boundaries of the present United States. This was a land already deluged with Spanish blood, for the conquest of Florida had been started with the formal landing of Ponce de León in 1513. De León explored the land, but he did not subdue its natives and his expeditions ended in his own fatal wounding and subsequent death. His motive for exploring Florida was probably personal and religious, but the motive which lured many other Spaniards was the hope of finding the mythical Western Passage. This hope led to the expeditions of Ayllon, Narváez, De Vesa, and De Soto, all of which ended in failure. The expedition of Ganez, 1544, for the purpose of spreading the Gospel ended in that leader's death at the hands of natives.⁷ The years between De León and Menéndez contributed half a century of Spanish misfortune, terminated in 1561 by the unsuccessful Luna-Villafañe campaign.⁸

Finally, in 1565, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, probably the greatest Spanish admiral of the day, began the first successful attempt to conquer Florida.⁹ The strategic position of this territory convinced the Spanish authorities that its occupation was necessary for the protection of Spanish commerce, and a new danger forced them to act immediately. Information had been

⁷H. E. Bolton, The Spanish Borderlands (New Haven, 1921), p. 189.

⁸H. I. Priestley, The Mexican Nation, a History (New York, 1923), p. 80.

⁹Lowery, p. 149.

received that French Huguenots were attempting to establish a settlement. This must be destroyed, and the Spanish court commissioned Menéndez to organize a large force, consisting of 2,646 men in thirty-four vessels.¹⁰ Menéndez's commission charged him to dislodge the French; to hold the land for Spain by military occupation; to colonize; and to civilize the natives by Christianization. Before he left Spain he made several attempts to secure missionaries who might aid him in the execution of the royal orders, but he failed and was compelled to sail without the clergy. His flotilla reached the shores of Florida on August 28, and on September 6 his men began the construction of a fort, the nucleus of St. Augustine.¹¹

As soon as the Frenchmen learned about the Spanish settlement they sent an expedition to destroy it, and while their forces were thus divided, Menéndez attacked and exterminated their

weakened garrison at Fort Caroline. The French expedition against him was shipwrecked and the scattered survivors became an easy prey to the Spanish soldiers. When his victory was completed, Menéndez turned his attention to occupying the new land.¹² Soon he became convinced, as he had previously suspected, that competent instructors were needed to civilize the natives. Menéndez

¹⁰John G. Shea, Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States (New York, 1854), p. 172.

¹¹Henry, p. 158.

¹²Ibid., p. 160.

realized that he needed men whose training was such that they could devote themselves exclusively to the care of the Indians and acquire their language. He stated, "It is only a loss of time to attempt to plant the Holy Gospel in this country by means of soldiers."¹³

His efforts to get members of religious orders to come to Florida were continued, for missionaries, he believed, were the forerunners of ecclesiastical foundations. The new Governor General and Adelantado apparently tried to get the Dominicans to found the first missions, for we find Father Segura writing,

What he [Menéndez] told us in Seville about not wanting to bring other religious but only Jesuits, I later found out was rather by way of inducement to persuade us to come.

For the Superior of a Dominican Monastery in Puerto Rico told me, when we came there, that the Governor had tried hard to get Religious of that Order, but that their Provincial had refused.¹⁴

Evidently when he failed with the Dominicans, Menéndez appealed to the general of the Society of Jesus and to the king, imploring them to provide him with the services of some of the Jesuit fathers, promising a rich harvest of souls. To the General in Rome he wrote from Madrid:

¹³Lowery, D., 265. In South America had been offered during

¹⁴Ruben V. Ugarte, S. J., "The First Jesuit Mission in Florida," Historical Records and Studies (New York, 1935), XXV, 68-71. This will be cited hereinafter as Ugarte.

March (?), 1565.

Very Reverend Sir:

The Father Provincial and his Companions probably have written to you about the journey I made by order of His Majesty to the land and coast of Florida, which is a land bordering on New Spain, and the land to the north and to the west is very near Tartary, China, and Molluca; and this land of Florida must be continuous (tierra firme) Tartary and China or there must be an arm of the sea which separates them, the land of Florida from whence they came. These lands and provinces are very large and the people of them are groping in the dark for Faith. It is a land of good climate and altitude in which people who go there will do well; and the necessary efforts being put forth with the people there, and having instruction, discipline and government, there is great hope that it may be a great opportunity for service to God our Saviour, and that the peoples of those lands and provinces will be enlightened and converted to our holy, Catholic Faith through the industry, persuasion and labor of the people who may go there.

And understanding the great benefit there would be in having some of the Fathers of the Society with me, I begged His Majesty to please allow me to take some, and knowing how much I desired it, he did so. I spoke of it to the Fr. Provincial in this place, to another companion in the house at Madrid (corte) and knowing the wish of His Majesty, they answered that owing to the death of their Fr. General, they could do nothing until after the general congregation which would be in two or three months. And as I must leave on my trip by the end of May, with the help of God, and cannot wait longer, I begged them to write to you so that you might send some with me from Seville in order that they may be the first religious order to land with me in those parts.¹⁵

This appeal from Menéndez recalled once more to the superiors of the Jesuits the idea of establishing missions in North America. Opportunities to go to Honduras, to Mexico, to Michoacán, and to Popayán in South America had been offered during the preceding year. Even as early as 1547 invitations had been forthcoming from various bishops and personages for Jesuit

¹⁵Epistolae Borgia, III, 762.

helpers. Near the time of the arrival of the invitation of Menéndez, another similar request for services of the Company came from Popayán.¹⁶ Previously the Jesuits had not had a sufficient number of men to permit a group to go to the new continent.¹⁷ But now there were several available, including Rogel who had persistently asked to be assigned as a missionary.

Some members of the Council of the Indies strongly opposed a mission of the Jesuits for reasons best known to themselves, but the king, for reasons of state, and with a certain zeal for the spread of the Faith, over-ruled that opposition.¹⁸ At this critical juncture Don Pedro Menéndez arrived at the court. He was apparently a man of solid piety, a practicing Catholic and well disposed to the Society. With the saintly Borgia, Vicar General, he had many conferences concerning his plan. Menéndez' presence, his insistence, and knowledge dispelled the clouds of suspicion and did away with specious pretexts against sending the Jesuits and shortly the order was given that some of the fathers should go to Florida.¹⁹

With this in view, on May 3, 1566, and again just five months after the campaign against the French in Florida, the king

¹⁶Mention of these invitations appear in the letters in Monumenta Historica, et passim.

¹⁷Letter of Bishop of Popayán to Borgia, dated April 8, 1565, in Epistolae Borgia, II, 785.

¹⁸F. X. Alegre, Historia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España (Mexico, 1841), I, 5. This will be cited hereinafter as Alegre.

¹⁹Ibid.

wrote to Francis Borgia,²⁰ then Third General of the Society, directing him to appoint twenty-four members of the company as missionaries in such parts of the Indies as the Royal Council should designate. The General could not spare so many, but offered to send a few to start the mission, promising reinforcements. Three were chosen, much to the pious envy of their brothers. Borgia elected Pedro Martínez, Juan Rogel, and Brother Villarreal. Of this Lowery states:

This was the first Jesuit mission to the West Indies . . . [and Rogel was one of three] who were to begin the ministrations of the Jesuits in the New World, labours, destined to culminate in the famous missions of Paraguay, of Canada and of California, with its stirring and tragic history.²¹

When news of his appointment reached Rogel in the midst of his pastoral cares, and when he realized that his long cherished ambition was about to be attained his sentiments must have been of profound gratitude after his years of waiting for missionary life. It would be interesting to know his comments when he learned that he was destined for the little known Florida of the New World rather than for the glamorous East. There is little recorded of his personal preparation for the voyage and it is not known whether or not he returned to Navarre to bid adieu to

²⁰Alegre, I, 3. The letter of the king in part is as follows: "Wherefore, I beseech and charge you that you name and order twenty-four persons of the Company to go to our Indies, whithersoever they may be assigned by our Council, that they be learned persons, of good life and example, and judged suitable for such an enterprise."

²¹Lowery, pp. 266-270.

relatives. Did he realize that this was the beginning of his real life work and that he was embarking into a world which would furnish him with numerous and sometimes dangerous adventures?

The Jesuits did not sail until June 28, 1566, and the tardiness of their departure has been frequently discussed. It is certain that the eager Menéndez wanted them to sail in June, 1565, with an expedition of which he was the head. As early as March of that year the new General of the Society and the Casa de Contratación, or Board of Trade, had received instructions from the king to make provisions for going, but a year later the missionaries were still in Spain.

On March 24, 1566, the officials of the Board of Trade were in receipt of four communications from the king, and another on April 9, expressing his wishes with regard to the religious men who had been chosen for service in Florida. These all concerned Rogel. The first order stated:

Madrid, March 24, 1566.

THE KING: To our officials of the Custom House of the Indies.

Know that we, out of our devotion toward the Religious of the Society of Jesus because of their exemplary and virtuous life, realizing they will bring forth much fruit in our Indies by instructing and converting the natives of that region, have arranged to send a certain number of them. For the present six Religious will go to the province of Florida in the fleet now being fitted out under the command of Sancho de Arsiniega. There they are to preach the Gospel and promulgate the evangelical law and root out the tares sown by French corsairs. Wherefore we command that you

furnish them with passage and provisions necessary for the voyage, and bid the said Arsiniega to transport in his fleet the said six Religious, named and designated by the Provincial of the Province of Andalusia. They are to be well-provided and treated with the utmost consideration that they may go the more readily and enthusiastically. Further, I order that, out of the monies you receive from our treasurer, you provide for the passage and provisioning of the said six Religious until their arrival in the Province of Florida. This will be done according to the usual procedure in providing for religious enroute to our Indies and according to the season in which they embark. Upon presentation of this my decree, of a bill of expenditures and of a receipt signed by the said Religious or by their agent, I command that you be paid the sum due you. Given at Madrid, March 24, 1566.

By His Majesty's Command,

Francisco de Eraso.

The second royal communication declared:

Madrid, March 24, 1566.

THE KING: To our officials of the Custom House in Seville.

Know that we are sending six Religious of the Society of Jesus, designated by the Provincial of the Province of Andalusia, to the Province of Florida. As it is our desire that you pay for the transportation of their books and other effects from their monasteries to that city, I command that out of the monies you receive from our treasurer, the muleteers who conduct the said Religious, their books and effects to that city, be paid the sum agreed upon by each of the said Religious for their transportation. Upon presentation of this my decree, and certification by the said Religious or their agent of the charge made for transporting their books, and effects, and a receipt signed by the said muleteers, I command that you be paid the amount due you. Given in Madrid, March 24, 1566.

By His Majesty's Command,

Francisco de Eraso.

The third edict advised:

Madrid, March 24, 1566.

THE KING: To our officials of the Custom House in Seville.

As you are aware from our other decrees, we have arranged to send to the Province of Florida six religious of the Society of Jesus for the instruction and conversion of the natives of that land, and have ordered that they be furnished passage and provisions for the Journey. Upon their arrival in (Seville) during their stay in that city while conducting their affairs at the Casa, and afterwards, during their stay at the Villa in San Lúcar de Barrameda while waiting to embark, it is our wish that they be supplied with everything necessary for their maintenance. Wherefore I order that, out of the monies paid you by our treasurer, you give each of the said Religious, or their agent, one real and a half, daily for their sustenance during their stay in that city and in the Villa of San Lúcar until they embark. Further, you are to bid them to pray to Our Lord in their Masses so to enlighten us that we may govern those regions well. On presentation of this my decree and of the receipt of the said Religious or their agent, I order that you be paid on account the sum due you. Given at Madrid, March 24, 1566.

By His Majesty's Command,

Francisco de Eraso.

The fourth decree detailed:

Madrid, March 24, 1566.

THE KING: To our officials of the Custom House of the Indies in Seville.

As you are aware from another decree of ours we have arranged to send to the Province of Florida six Religious of the Society of Jesus, named by the Provincial of Andalusia. Further, we ordered that they be furnished passage and provisions until their arrival in Florida, as the said Religious will need to be supplied with clothing, I order you to furnish each one a cloak, a cassock, and a biretta, a mattress, a blanket and a pillow for shipboard. On presentation of a testimonial witnessed by a notary relative to the costs, and a receipt signed by the said Religious or their agent, I order that you be paid on account the sum due you. All

this and whatever else we order to be given for their passage should be promptly supplied that they may sail in the fleet now making ready. Given at Madrid, March 24, 1566.

By His Majesty's Command,

Francisco de Eraso.

The fifth message confirmed the previous ones as follows:

Velez, April 9, 1566.

THE KING: To our officials of the Custom House of the Indies in Seville.

As you are aware from other decrees of ours which we have ordered sent you, we have arranged to send to the Province of Florida six Religious of the Society of Jesus, named by the Provincial of the Province of Andalusia and have ordered that you furnish them passage and provisions necessary for the voyage. We have been informed that the General of the said Society has selected three of the said Religious from the Province of Castile, Fathers Gerónimo Ruiz del Portillo, Bautista de Segura and Martínez, and another from this Province of Toledo, namely, Father Regal. It is our will that the above named go. Wherefore I order that, notwithstanding our above mentioned decrees, you command that these four Religious, as included among the six designated by the said Provincial, be permitted to sail for the Province of Florida and that our former decrees be applied to them. It is our will, also that the other two be those named by the Provincial of that Province. You will see to it that all six Religious sail in the fleet now preparing under command of Sancho de Arziniaga and that they are well supplied as we ordered. Let this be done without hindrance of any kind. Given at Velez, April 9, 1566.

By His Majesty's Command,

Francisco de Eraso.²²

²²Ugarte, pp. 68-71, contains these cédulas as translated by A. J. Owen, S. J.

From these instructions a number of items may be gathered. First of all, the king considered the going of the missionaries and their comfort so important that he sent four letters about it in one day. In the next place there is a constant repetition of the number of religious to go, namely, six. Evidently something happened between March 24 and June 28, 1566, which prevented three of the six mentioned from embarking for Florida. And evidently something happened which prevented the Jesuits from sailing with the fleet in command of Sancho de Arziniaga, which left in April while they left at the end of June. Then, too, in between the two dates, March 24 and June 28, the king wrote another letter demanding that twenty-four be sent to the Indies, by which he meant any place or some place in his vast overseas possessions. This was on May 3.²³ There has been some speculation among historians concerning the delay and the cutting of the number from six to three.²⁴ The reasons seem to be that six Jesuits were really appointed for the Indies, some to go to Florida and some to Perú. Since the letters mention only four names, it seems clear that the provincials had not decided upon the other two, and therefore there was a delay until the fathers could be chosen and informed.²⁵ Meanwhile, Rogel and Martínez

²³Cf. n. 20, above.

²⁴Kenny, pp. 153-160, discusses a number of reasons for the delay, all of which indicate a dispute between the Jesuit superiors.

²⁵Ugarte, p. 61.

had to wait. Father Portillo, who was one of those appointed, led a band to Perú in the following year.

From the king's decrees to the House of Trade it is also clear that Rogel was to be supported on one real and a half during his wait. He had to get money, too, for the muleteer who was to carry his baggage and books from Valencia to Seville and San Lucar. Most likely he had to present his order at the House of Trade for his cloak, cassock, biretta, mattress, blanket, and pillow for the journey overseas. And he had to gather provisions and his effects for the passage. In between these various duties he was supposed to pray that the king would be enlightened to govern his empire well.

An encouraging letter to the three Jesuits came from Francis Borgia who sent his own special blessing and the spiritual favors and privileges of Pope Pius V.²⁶ Assurances of prayers for the success of the enterprise were received from other members of the Society. Don Pedro Castillo liberally provided them with books, vestments, chalices and all that was needed for the proper celebration of the Mass.²⁷ And so with pious enthusiasm Father

²⁶Kenny, p. 171.

²⁷Ibid., p. 171. Father Kenny states that Pedro Menéndez had made himself personally responsible for all the expenses of the priests. This does not seem to be in accord with what has been stated above. From the letters of the King to the House of Trade it is clear that the King made himself responsible for these expenses of clothing, food, and transportation. There was no question of salary because the Jesuits could not receive a salary.

Rogel and his companions finally saw the anchors hoisted and the sheets unfurled. The ship sailed away over the horizon, bearing the three missionaries eager to serve for the greater glory of God.

CHAPTER III

A JOURNEY TO THE NEW WORLD

The missionaries set sail from San Lucar on June 28, 1566, in a ship which was not manned by Spanish sailors. It was a Flemish sloop¹ and the foreign origin of the ship and crew may have had something to do with the misfortune which dogged the footsteps of the passengers.

A sea voyage in the sixteenth century was a trial of endurance that only people with iron constitutions could stand, and Father Rogel and his companions had embarked in a vessel much inferior to the famous Spanish caravels. A sloop was a ship with a single mast and its hull probably consisted simply of a hold covered over by a deck. Such holds were usually filled with sand for ballast to keep the ship upright. The sand made a floor on which a fireplace was constructed; the chimney running up through the deck. Cooking utensils were cluttered around the fireplace and food scraps and garbage were either buried in the sand or tossed into buckets to be hauled aloft and thrown into the sea. The hold was a dreary place, below the level of the water, smelly and full of smoke. The passengers were confined to this dark cavern in rough weather. High seas sometimes washed the deck

¹Alegre, I, 5.

and sailors battened down the hatches to prevent the waves from flowing into the hold, thus closing the only openings to air and sky. At such times it was, of course, dark as pitch except for a few swinging lanterns, - gloomy and silent except for the squeak of straining planks and the swish of water at the prow. The food was vile. Fruit and vegetables could not be kept. The bread was often mouldy and alive with weevils. The salt meat was always maggoty and sometimes rotten. To endure such fare cost many sturdy men their lives and often half the crew was down with scurvy.²

Father Rogel, in a letter written after his voyage,³ gave some interesting details of the passage. Father Martínez, he wrote, began his missionary work with the sailors on the ship, succeeding so signally that Father Rogel was busy day and night hearing confessions. The success of these conversions denotes an unusual zeal on the part of the fathers. For the sailors, being Flemings, spoke a foreign language which had to be mastered before the Jesuit's message could be understood. Father Martínez, however, had a gift for strange tongues and before the ship reached the Canary Islands, July 7, it was said that he could

²W. E. Woodward, A New American History (New York, 1936), p. 28. Considerable improvement and comfort for the traveler seems to have been brought about in the course of a century and a half. Cf. description of Jesuit travel in Theodore E. Trentlein's "Jesuit Travel to New Spain, 1678-1756," in Mid-America, XIX, 104-123.

³Kenny, p. 175.

speak Flemish almost as fluently as his native Castilian; and the Admiral, commending his good workers, pronounced the crew, unlike sailors generally, to be almost saints.⁴

The Canary Islands, situated off the west coast of Africa, were a usual port of call for vessels bound to the New World. Definitely recognized as Spanish territory shortly before Columbus discovered America, they were the last bit of Spanish soil sighted by the travelers before reaching the West Indies. They were rocky islands with one mountain peak generally covered with snow during the month Rogel visited the island. This snowy peak must have reminded him of his native Pyrenees and certainly presented a very different landscape from the flat tropics of Florida which lay ahead.

Rogel, Martínez, and probably Villarreal continued their missionary work in the Canary Islands as soon as they set foot there. As was customary in Catholic lands, the fathers were welcomed affectionately by the people and were allowed by the clergy to preach and to hear confessions. When not talking in the pulpit to the adults, the fathers went through the streets ringing a bell to attract the children who were led gradually to the plaza. There they were taught the catechism and religious songs. For five days Rogel and Martínez preached in the streets and churches, hearing confessions between sermons, listening to the

⁴Kenny, p. 175.

cares of sick and troubled people, and bringing about peace between enemies. When the days of their visitation were over and they were ready to re-embark all of the officials, civil and religious, and a grateful crowd of people were at the wharf waving a farewell.⁵

It was sometimes customary for fleets to assemble at the Canaries before making the last lap of their journey across the Atlantic. Whether the Flemish sloop which carried the pilgrims had come from Spain alone and fell in at the Canaries with a convoy is not plain in the documents available. But certainly their ship left the islands with a small fleet, for it is recorded that the Viceroy of New Spain before embarking on his flagship to accompany the convoy, bade adieu to Regel and Martínez, asking their blessing and presenting them with many suitable gifts for their mission. This viceroy, Don Martín Enríquez, Marqués de Solsea, was destined to welcome the first Jesuits to Mexico City six years later.⁶

Leaving the Canary Islands on July 13, the fleet made a swift and safe journey to the Indies, arriving in sight of the most easterly islands on the ninth of August. For two days longer, the Flemish vessel remained with the fleet, and did not drop out of the flotilla until it arrived somewhere southeast

⁵Kenny, pp. 176-177.

⁶Ibid., p. 177.

of Puerto Rico. At this point the fleet continued its course to Cartagena and Vera Cruz while the missionaries' vessel turned its prow to the north and sailed away toward Havana through the lonely waters which lap the rocky shores of the Virgin Islands, with Puerto Rico on its left.⁷

There is some dispute between different historians regarding the exact route taken by Rogel and Martínez after breaking away from the Spanish fleet. The dates given by chroniclers for their departure from Spain and their arrival in Florida waters also differ. Father Kenny, quoting an ancient document, says that the mariners arrived somewhere on the coasts of Florida on August 28. But Father Astrain, a noted Jesuit historian, quoting an old letter of Rogel's, asserts that the Flemish sloop first made its way to Havana, where it was delayed for several days by the captain who attempted to engage the services of a sufficiently competent pilot to guide him to St. Augustine.⁸ Since this latter statement is also found in Father Alegre's earlier work,⁹ and since Father Alegre was the most noted eighteenth century historian among the Jesuits of New Spain, his statement seems valid. Moreover, both of the latter appear to be citing the same letter as that used by Kenny.

⁷Alegre, I, 5; Kenny, p. 177.

⁸Astrain, II, 237.

⁹Alegre, I, 5.

Assuming, then, that the vessel stopped at Havana, it follows that the Jesuits sailed past the Island of Española, first sighted by Columbus more than two generations earlier, and along the coast of Cuba until they reached the famous harbor. This route was beginning to be infested with pirates, but when Father Rogel sailed along the tropical coast these marauders of the sea were probably less numerous than they were along the coast of Rogel's homeland, - Spain. However, they were feared by all travelers, for even as early as 1529 the Spanish government had established a coast guard to protect the islands.¹⁰ In time the pirates would build towns in the less frequented bays of this island and England and France would finance them in this vicious trade.¹¹ Indeed, such gentlemen pirates as Drake and Hawkins were probably already planning raids on the Spanish convoys at the same time as the little Flemish sloop carrying Rogel was wandering along the coast. Certainly, within a year Captain John Hawkins visited the Islands with a cargo of negro slaves for sale, and from this and later trips this English sea-dog gained a knowledge of Spanish wealth which made freebooting both easy and profitable.¹²

¹⁰H. H. Bancroft, History of Central America (San Francisco, 1886), II, 451.

¹¹For aid given pirates by government officials of England and France, see Violet Barbour, "Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies," American Historical Review, XVI, 531.

¹²Justin Winsor, Narrative and Critical History of North America (Boston and New York, 1899), VIII, 195. Vivid

Havana, when the missionaries reached it, was one of the principal seaports of the West Indies. The town had been built for more than a generation. Its beauty and renown was almost world-wide. Father Alegre wrote of Havana:

Its port is the most comodious, most secure and best defended in America, sufficient for many boats and offering all a shelter from the fury of the winds. Two castles defend the narrow entrance to the port, whose mouth looks almost directly to the northeast; another fortress in the city guards the interior of the bay and the landing pier, where resided the governor and captain general of all the island. All is guarded by a wall sufficiently high and wide and flanked by various buttresses and bastions, crowned in the important places by artillery of various calibres. The climate, though warm, is healthy; the land, cut into small plots of perennial amenity and verdure, is a land beautiful to see. The city is large and, compared to its size, the most populous in America. The frequency of boats from Europe, the safeness of the port, which, when it is permitted, draws many strangers on their way to Europe; the appointments of its shipyards, preferable to all those in the world for the fine quality and durability of its woods . . . make it one of the richest and neatest communities of the New World.¹³

Already when Fathers Rogel and Martínez visited this beautiful city of the southern seas, Havana had been eyed with envy by the powers of Europe. In 1555, eleven years before the priests landed, French Protestant filibusters had sacked the city, burned monuments, and destroyed churches. No doubt there still

accounts of pirate raids during the last half of the Sixteenth Century are found scattered through Bancroft's Works; Maurice Besson, The Scourge of the Indies (London, 1929), p. 4 ff.; James Burney, History of the Buccaneers of America (London, 1816); William Wood, Elizabethan Sea-Dogs (New Haven, 1918); Arthur P. Newton, European Nations in the West Indies (London, 1933).

¹³Alegre, I, 11.

remained ancient walls broken and smoked by the assault.¹⁴

In these picturesque surroundings the Flemish vessel was detained while an attempt was made to employ the services of a pilot familiar with the little known coast of Florida. It seems that many people had misgivings about the northern lands. Although the outline of the peninsula had been known to Spanish navigators for over fifty years, - at least since Ponce de León had made his unsuccessful quest for the Fountain of Youth in 1513, - the peninsula was in many ways an unknown continent even to the seamen in Havana. De Soto and others had added to the scanty accounts of the first explorers. In 1553 the treasure fleet sailing from Vera Cruz to Spain had been driven from its course by heavy winds until most of the vessels were wrecked on the Florida reefs. Of a thousand passengers and seamen, it is said, only three hundred reached the shore, where they were massacred by the Indians almost to a man.¹⁵ This disaster had attracted the attention of the Spanish monarch and the Luna y Arellano punitive expedition set off in thirteen vessels for the barbarous coast. But the Indians in Florida proved as dangerous to the Spaniards in the Sixteenth Century as they were to the Americans in the Seminole War, three hundred years later.

¹⁴Besson, The Scourge of the Indies, p. 4.

¹⁵Baneroff, History of Central America, II, 593.

No wonder then that a pilot could not be found in all Havana who was familiar with the distant coast. In fact Spain's title to the dreaded peninsula was so uncertain that only two years before (1564), as previously mentioned, a settlement of French Huguenots, questioning Spain's title to the land, had been expelled by force. The French had retaliated for this act, hanging Spaniards in the outposts of St. Augustine. Indeed, while Rogel and Martínez were impatiently waiting in Havana, it is safe to say that French and Spanish ships might come to blows at any time over the possession of this disputed land. What with the fears of navigators, the unknown land, the hostility of the Indians, the presence of the French and the pirates, a more dangerous field for missionaries would be difficult to find.

In 1566 St. Augustine and the few hastily built forts supporting it were so meagre, squalid, and far from the well-known sea lanes, that the average pilot, even in a shipping center like Havana, probably knew of them only by their names. And their names were full of tragedy, for the Florida to which Rogel, Martínez and Villarreal were carrying the cross in 1566 was a land haunted by a dismal record of misery, - death from shipwreck, hardships and disease; death from the hands of treacherous savages and from rival European soldiers scarcely less barbarous. To spread the Gospel in such a land where so many had lost their way, must have taken rare courage, but Rogel and his companions were ready to sail forth to its inhospitable shores. Havana to

CHAPTER IV

A TRIP TO FLORIDA

When land appeared the Jesuits must have looked with mixed feelings of interest and exultation at the flat wilderness which they had been sent to evangelize. Probably they were more concerned over the fate of the ship and the location of the Spanish settlements as they looked across the low coast and the shallows extending far out into the ocean. Anyone familiar with the coast of Florida three hundred and fifty years later, with its wharves and harbors, cannot adequately judge the anxiety of the captain and the fears of his men as they gazed at the dreary waste of sand and water which spread itself before them. No man on board had any idea of the location of the land sighted; whether St. Augustine was within one or one hundred miles. The captain decided to send a landing party to find out, if possible, the position of the ship and the proximity of the Spanish settlements.

The tragedy which followed this investigation is too well known to be recounted.¹ It marked the end of the friendship between Rogel and Martínez which had begun in school in Spain. When the crew made preparations for launching the landing

¹Accounts of the death of Martínez may be found in more or less detail in Alegre, Lowery, Kenny, Lanning, etc.

boat, the two Jesuits noticed that the Flemings hesitated to take their places at the oars. Perhaps the memory of many massacres came to the minds of the sailors as they watched the long line of breakers on the coast. Father Martínez had converted these rude mariners to Christian life, and now they all hesitated to undertake the precarious journey without his leadership. The ship.

The father (Martínez), carried away by this charity . . . , leaped into the launch first, inspiring the others by his example and by the extraordinary happiness of his countenance.²

Father Rogel and Brother Villarreal, we may suppose, watched the launch until it reached land and possibly they may have seen the small figures moving along the shore after the launch was beached. Almost immediately the attention of the seamen was called to other things. One of the sudden and violent storms so common to that region was darkening the sky. The sailors rushed around the decks preparing the rigging and shouting orders. The cannon was fired to recall the men on the beach, but to no avail. The continuous rumblings of the thunder and the roaring of the seas prevented the sound from being heard. Already the waves breaking on the sandy shore had become so large that to launch the boat and return to the ship was impossible. The ship itself was soon blown far from the coast.

²Alegre, I, 6.

The captain intended to return to pick up the launch and its passengers, but the Flemings by insistences and even by threats forced him to turn the prow to sea and follow the course to Havana.³

Judging from the above, it is clear that there was a minor mutiny on board the ship and that the captain was forced by the Flemings to desert Martínez and his men to a terrible fate in an unknown wilderness. Nothing is said by Alegre about the part played by Regel in this desertion. As a priest he must have been vitally interested in the welfare of his companion and he must have felt great concern over the fate of the landing party. On the other hand, with mutiny imminent, he was probably as helpless as the captain.

During the stormy season, Havana was not as easily reached as the crew may have imagined and before that port of haven was gained a renewed gale blew the sloop far to the south and east of Cuba to the shores of Española where a safe anchorage was made in the harbor of Monte Cristi, seven or eight hundred miles from Havana. Strangely enough, Regel, in a long letter, describing his journey, omits this detour, but Alegre states that the incident "is recorded in an old manuscript."⁴ Perhaps, Regel by this time was so seasoned a sailor that he took such a jaunt as a matter of course. Perhaps the ocean was so rough that he could make no notes of the voyage and later forgot to do so.

³Alegre, I, 9.

⁴Ibid., I, 10.

Perhaps, too, there were some events and hard feelings on the part of the captain and crew which he preferred not to put in writing, lest somebody be incriminated.

The sloop remained at Monte Cristi for probably three weeks being repaired and refitted for the sea. During this stay the inevitable fevers attacked Father Rogel and Brother Villarrreal but the father's pre-Jesuit training came to his aid. As he said, "my knowledge of medicine helped me,"⁵ and he was soon able to take advantage of his enforced leisure in the town to publish a plenary jubilee, which gave the religious opportunity to preach a number of times in the public places of the city. Then, too, there must have been confessions for all those who desired to gain the plenary indulgence which Rogel had the faculties to bestow. During the course of this jubilee, Don Pedro Menéndez Márquez, nephew of the famous adelantado, Pedro Menéndez, stopped at the port and it was in company with his ship that Rogel and his companion continued their voyage to Havana, leaving November 25 and arriving on December 15, 1566.⁶ After an almost continuous voyage since leaving Spain, the two remaining missionaries were still far from their destination in Florida.

The foregoing account of the missionaries' itinerary and the location of the martyrdom of Father Martínez is one of the mysteries of history. Writers on the subject do not agree

⁵Kenny, p. 189.

⁶Ibid.

on the date on which the missionaries left Spain. Some maintain that the Flemish sloop sailed directly to Florida without stopping at Havana, as was indicated in the preceding chapter. The date of arrival on the Florida coast is a moot question, and the location of the place of martyrdom of Father Martínez may have been almost anywhere from the Florida keys to the Carolinas. It might be well to digress a little from the main story in order to review the disputed points. The discrepancies and contradictions of the chroniclers and historians are illuminating.

Lanning⁷ fixes the date of departure of the missionaries from Spain as July 28. Father Kenny⁸ begs the question by stating that they arrived at the Canary Islands on July 7. Alegre⁹ and Ugarte¹⁰ fix June 28 as the day of departure, which must obviously be more nearly correct if the travelers arrived in the Canaries early in July. Another Jesuit historian of great note, Astrain, corroborates this latter date¹¹ when he says:

The three missionaries set sail on the 28 of June, 1566. They went on the fleet which was sailing for Florida. All the boats were together until they entered the Gulf of Mexico.

⁷Lanning, p. 36.

⁸Kenny, p. 176.

⁹Alegre, I, 6.

¹⁰Ugarte, p. 61.

¹¹Astrain, II, 287.

Father Andrés Pérez de Rivas says they "departed on July 28 of that same year for Florida, where they arrived September 24."¹² In view of the data cited above the preponderance of evidence favors June 28 as the date of departure.

The other moot point on which historians do not agree, - the question as to whether or not the Flemish sloop landed at Havana before proceeding to the coast of Florida, was summed up in the preceding chapter. Father Kenny and Father Alegre give separate accounts from the same document and the conclusion substantiated by Astrain's account was that Rogel had gone to Havana. But when did the boat arrive there and when did it depart?

We drew away from the fleet at nightfall on Sunday, August 11, and took our course between the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, sailing with fair winds until we reached Florida. We experienced no violent tempests, but now and then were becalmed.¹³

Father Astrain supplements this account, presenting in some respects important differences,¹⁴ said to also have been derived from Rogel's account,¹⁵ which stated:

When the Flemish sloop which carried the missionaries parted from the fleet, it put in at the port of Havana, where they stopped some days to find a pilot who could guide their

¹²Andrés Pérez de Rivas, Crónica y Historia Religiosa de la Compañía de Jesús en Nueva España (Mexico, 1896), II, 212. This will be cited hereinafter as Rivas.

¹³Kenny, p. 177.

¹⁴Astrain, II, 287.

¹⁵Kenny, p. 178.

vessel to St. Augustine in Florida. As none willing or competent could be found, they decided to sail without one, taking with them charts and written directions for the course.

As both these accounts are said to be based on Rogel's own statement, and as Astrain's eminence is unquestioned, it seems reasonable to conclude that the latter's amplified account is accurate and that the precise date of the arrival and departure of Rogel from Havana is not known.

The next questionable point concerning this ancient voyage which was to assume such historical significance and be disputed by historians, was when and where did the travelers first sight the coast of Florida. Kenny quoting again from Rogel, but not citing an exact reference in the letter, states that the missionaries arrived off an unknown coast on September 14.¹⁶ Previous to this date, the historian states, the sloop was in sight of St. Augustine on August 28, and although the town was probably not visible from the ship, a boat set out from land to hail it but was prevented from doing so by a sudden storm. The next day, August 29, the vessel sent a boat to shore, continues Kenny, but no person could be found to give the landing party any information as to their location.

Astrain's account states:

Either through misunderstanding . . . or inaccuracy of the nautical chart, they wandered for a month around the

¹⁶Kenny, p. 178.

Florida waters, until, September 14, they found themselves some ten leagues from an unknown coast.¹⁷

This account, taken also directly from Rogel, can very well be fitted into the former's statement. "Wandering for a month" might include sighting land several times. Alegre's statement that the sloop after leaving Havana "drifted for about a month until September 24, when . . . they sighted land," may also be explained in the same manner as Astrain's, but there is obviously a difference of ten days to be accounted for. Pérez de Rivas also gives the date as September 24. Lanning states that Martínez landed with his companions "about September 28."¹⁸ This leaves three dates in September on which Martínez may have landed in Florida. As his martyrdom seems to have occurred several days subsequent to his landing, it is probably impossible as well as unimportant to fix a definite date.

The geographical location of his martyrdom is more important, but in this case again a definite location of the spot seems to be impossible. Various latitudes are given by the navigators, but when it is remembered that the vessel was admittedly lost, the value of such information must be questioned. Kenny states that the Flemish sloop sent a boat ashore at "somewhat better than latitude 32° 30'."¹⁹ This would be somewhere in

¹⁷Astrain, p. 287.

¹⁸Lanning, p. 36.

¹⁹Kenny, p. 179.

Georgia, but it was not at this point that Martínez was martyred. The account states that the vessel touched later at 30° 30', and it was here that Martínez landed but he and his companions wandered along the coast for some time before the Indians killed him. This location, if the computed latitude was correct, may have been some of the islands at the extreme southern end of Georgia. Lanning, whose account of the trip seems erroneous, states that the landing place was Cumberland Island.²⁰ The account of Alegre does not substantiate such a conclusion. He states:

Either through incorrect information or through error in making the nautical chart which set down the location of the places, they drifted for about a month until September 24, when ten leagues from the coast, they sighted land between 25° and 26° to the West of Florida.²¹

In Spanish the statement reads: "Dieron vista a la tierra entre los 25 y 26 grados al West de la Florida."

Twenty-five or thirty degrees latitude might be either in the Atlantic ocean or in the Gulf or Mexico, and if the point was west of Florida it follows that the location must have been in the gulf. However, there is no such word in the Spanish language as "west," and it may be argued that had Alegre meant "west of Florida," he would have written "oeste de la Florida." It is easy to explain that the printer might have substituted

²⁰Lanning, p. 37.

²¹Alegre, I, 5.

by error the letter "w" for "o," but it is less likely that he should have made two mistakes in the same word, omitting the final "e" which is necessary for the word "oeste." In evaluating such errors it must also be taken into consideration that Alegre was writing two hundred years after the event occurred, and his information could only have been derived from documentary evidence. Unless this can be produced and evaluated, Kenny's account, following Woodbury Lowery and placing the site of the martyrdom on the east coast, and purporting to have been derived from Rogel's narrative, is the most convincing of the evidence.

The mystery of the location of the place of the martyrdom of Father Martínez is further complicated by recent discoveries of Reverend Reuben Vargas Ugarte, S. J., former Professor of History at the Gregorian University at Rome. Father Ugarte quotes a contemporary of Father Rogel, who knew him personally and who stated that the Jesuits "arriving in Florida with but little knowledge of the country . . . disembarked on the first land they found opposite Havana, now known as the town of Carlos, and the coast, Los Mártires."²² According to this account the martyrdom was on the west coast of Florida and the authority is good. Therefore the evidence seems to come down to the accounts of two contemporaries, one who was present and one who was a friend of the man who was present. If the legal theory that hearsay evidence is not admissible can be applied to history, the

²²"Narrative of the Martyrdom," according to Pedro Rivadeneira, in Ugarte, p. 135.

preponderance of evidence seems to point to an island on the eastern coast of Florida or Georgia as the location of the martyrdom.

This conclusion is further substantiated by another letter from father Rogel, written in 1569, in which he states:

The commandant of St. Augustine has decided to attack the Indians of Saturiba and their allies. . . . These Indians are all on an island called Tacatacura where they killed Father Martinez who is in Heaven.²³

These same Indians are also said to have aided the French in the destruction of Fort St. Matthew which was on the east coast. The Saturiba Indians lived between the St. Mary's and St. John's rivers and the adjacent country. All these facts seem to make it as certain as most historical facts can be, that the east coast of what was then Florida was the site of the martyrdom.

The activities of Father Rogel after returning to the Havana in the winter of 1566, are not clouded by any such contradictions. His extreme hardships in the southern oceans entitled him to some of the comforts and security afforded by the populous city of Havana and he turned with enthusiasm to his religious duties. Repeating the success he had achieved in Monte Cristi, the priest announced another Jubilee. Preaching and confessions

²³Letter of Juan Rogel to Francis Borgia, Feb. 5, 1569, in Ugarte, p. 103.

proved popular, and the starved souls were eager for the services of the Jesuits. A house and maintenance were offered the missionaries for their work and Rogel devoted himself constantly to preaching and catechizing. There were three thousand negroes on the island who had been shipped to the estates. They were pagans, "for," Rogel wrote, "people come out here seeking riches and their own advantage, not the things that are of Christ."²⁴ The negroes needed missionaries as much as the Indians and Father Rogel and Brother Villarreal were kept busy instructing them. Father Rogel is credited with being the first to call the attention of the Society to the colored field, - a call which soon had full response in St. Peter Claver, Apostle of the Negroes.

The missionary work of the father and brother in Cuba was temporarily interrupted when "the two companions' . . . robustness of body" broke down under "the fiery activity of their spirit" and both were soon "ill under care The continuous assistance and solicitude of the most influential of the city, and especially of Pedro Menéndez Marques, showed clearly how much interest there was in the life and health of both."²⁵ The fever abated in time and while Rogel was convalescing the adelantado arrived. After discussing the question of evangelizing the land to the north a definite decision was reached.²⁶

²⁴Kenny, p. 190.

²⁵Alegre, I, 12.

²⁶Rivas, II, 212.

This time Rogel was to go, not to San Agustín but to Carlos, a small military post on the west coast of the peninsula, and there dwell with Reinoso, who with thirty-five soldiers had erected a blockhouse in the land of sand and jungles. Brother Villarreal was to go to Tegesta or Tecuesta on the east coast.

CHAPTER V

THE APOSTLE OF WEST FLORIDA

Father Regel and Brother Villarreal did not have an easy time getting away from the citizens of Havana. They had found in the breasts of many of the inhabitants hearts that were very susceptible to their pious counsels. There was every hope of a successful ministry if they consented to remain in Havana. The inhabitants tried in a thousand ways to prevent their departure, promising a house, alms, and support. Why attempt doubtful success in the wilderness when much good could be done safely in the city? The offers were flattering and revealed the great esteem in which the religious were held, but their sturdy spirits refused the abundance and friendliness for the poverty and trials of Florida. With many good wishes and abundant supplies given by the people they set sail on February 28, 1567. Menéndez was in personal charge of the expedition, determined that no ill fate should overtake the Jesuits.¹

In the vast area of what is now the whole of southeastern United States and then was known as Florida, the Spaniards had five garrisons, Santa Elena, San Agustín, and Tegesta on the east coast, Carlos and Tocobago on the west. Tocobago was twenty

¹The contents of this paragraph are in Alegre, I, 12, with the exception of the date which is given by Kenny, p. 190.

leagues northwest of Carlos,² or Charlotte Bay.

When the boats weighed anchor in Charlotte Bay after the voyage from Havana, Rogel and his companion were warmly welcomed by Captain Reinoso, the officer in charge of the post. At this outpost of Spanish Empire Rogel was to remain more than a year. The surrounding territory was ruled by a petty king or cacique, named Carlos who was an ally of the Spaniards. After some time Pedro Menéndez departed taking with him Brother Villareal whom he dropped off at Tegesta. Rogel thus was left alone as superior of the very small missionary enterprise and he went about planning his work and looking over his surroundings.

The first thing to be done was to erect a chapel. This temporary structure was the first place of Christian worship on the west coast of Florida.³ In it Rogel began his ministrations by saying Mass and preaching to the soldiers. With characteristic Jesuit thoroughness he perfected his knowledge of the Indian dialect in order to begin his missionary work among the aborigines. Before leaving Havana Father Rogel had started to compile an Indian grammar, from his contacts with the Carlos Indians in the city. This work now proved profitable to him and many new words

²Alegre, loc. cit. Kenny, in his map places Tegesta on the east coast at the site of the present Miami, and says, p. 192, it was near Miami; Alegre apparently has a misprint of "Tegesta" for "Tocobago." He states that the Spaniards had four garrisons, two on the east and two on the west coast. He does not mention Tocobago, but says Tegesta was twenty leagues northwest of Carlos.

³Kenny, p. 191.

were added to his vocabulary. His study of Florida Indian linguistics is said to have been the first of its kind, but unfortunately it has not been preserved.⁴

The task of converting the savages to the Catholic faith was by no means an easy one. Next in rank to the caciques were medicine men, Javvas, - false priests, - the Spaniards called them. These half-naked fakirs combined the practice of medicine with their crude paganism and by so doing retained a strong hold on the superstitious minds of the natives, doing everything in their power to prevent the Indians from adopting Christianity. Their jealousy knew no bounds and the whites and Indians soon came to blows as is adequately described by Alegre:

Opposite a small height where the fort of Carlos was situated was another which had a temple dedicated to their idols. These consisted in some hideous masquerades for which the priests vested, and which proceeded down through the village situated in the valley between the two hills. Here, like in our processions, the women sang for a time certain chants and made turns in the plain, and at length the Indians went into their houses, offered their worship, danced and returned to their idols in the temple. On many other occasions on which the padre and the Spaniards, to their sorrow, had been made witness of this sacrilegious ceremony, the Indians determined one day to climb up the fort of the Spaniards, and to carry before it their idols as if to demand adoration from the Spaniards, or in case these were outraged to have some just motive for revolt, and to have as some afterward confessed, some occasion to destroy the minister of Jesus Christ. The father, full of zeal, reprimanded them for their attempt

⁴Kenny, p. 191, gives Rogel "the honor of being the first to put into that form, if partially, a native language of North America." This may be true if it is admitted that Mexico was not a part of the continent, for such had been done there long before 1537.

and commanded them to stay in the valley; but they, who had no other intention than to provoke the Spaniards to come out of the enclosure of the fortress, persisted in going up the hill, until the captain, Francisco Reinoso, descended upon them, and in the first encounter wounded one of the idols or masquerading priests on the head by a blow with the reverse of his lance. The barbarians rushed in a frenzy to their huts, armed themselves with their clubs and weapons, and returned with about five hundred to the fort. But since a troop of Spaniards had already been drawn up under arms, they had to return without attempting to scale the height.⁵

Under such strained circumstances, one can realize how an entire year passed with very few conversions among the rude inhabitants of the Floridas. Some large crosses were erected in order to gather the primitive people for instruction in Catholic dogmas but very few adults were baptised and those who were, soon returned to paganism. The promise of relief from physical hunger seemed to be the only thing which appealed to the red men. The few boys who gathered to chant the catechism would repeat no other words than those which brought them food.⁶ It was clear that the Indians were not going to give up their idols. But the native religion was only one source of friction and discouragement.

In the midst of these affairs it was discovered that Don Carlos, the cacique who had professed friendship, was plotting a conspiracy against the Spaniards. For this he was condemned to death by the white men and promptly executed, and the

⁵Alegre, I, 15-16.

⁶Ibid.

missionary felt a ray of hope when he was succeeded by his brother Felipe who was believed to be more friendly to the Europeans. However, the new cacique listened attentively to the instructions and exhortations of the father, but before he submitted to be baptized he revealed the amazing decision that he intended to marry his own sister.

When Father Rogel represented to him how contrary such a procedure was to the faith which he was about to espouse, the chieftain replied with disdain that if he should have to give up his sister he would be violating the customs of his people, who considered such unions not only proper but necessary.⁷ Don Felipe insisted also that by disavowing paganism and his idols he would lose the allegiance of his subordinates as well as his chieftainship.

Father Rogel has left a record of the strange religion of these savages. They easily accepted the Oneness of God, he wrote, as Creator and Lord of all, and the Trinity as they understood it.

Every man, they say, has three souls. The first is the apple of his eye, the second the shadow he casts, the third his likeness in a glass. When he dies the two latter leave the body, but the first remains in the corpse; hence they go to the graves and ask the advice of their dead as if alive. It must be the evil spirit that speaks to them, for they learn there many unknown things and are advised to kill the Christians. When an Indian falls sick they say that one of his souls has escaped, and the medicine man goes to the

⁷Alegre, I, 17.

forests in search of it and herds it back like one drives goats in an enclosure. Seizing the sick man by the neck they force the truant soul into him again and light fires all around to keep it there. When a man dies, his principal soul enters an animal or fish, and when this dies enters a smaller one, and so descends until it reaches nothingness. Hence it is difficult to convince them of the immortality of the soul and of the resurrection.⁸

The condemned chief Carlos had left a strong impression upon the Indians that the ultimate purpose of the Spaniards was to enslave them. In vain did the new cacique reassure his tribesmen that the missionary had come to instruct and protect them. He advised his people to lead a sedentary and peaceful life but to no avail. Practically all the adults remained in their fixed pagan ways. It was only the children and a few grown-ups whom Father Rogel could persuade to come to his room to receive lessons in the new faith. At Tegesta Brother Villarreal had no better success.⁹

With paganism so deeply imbedded and with strife going on between the natives themselves and between the Spaniards and natives, it is difficult to see how the mission of Rogel was ever to succeed. Added to this another serious impediment is recounted in one of the newly discovered letters of Rogel. He states:

From the foregoing Your Paternity will learn how well we have started to implant the Holy Gospel in these lands and

8Kenny, p. 194.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 199-201, gives an account of the work of Brother Villarreal. The chapter containing this information is entitled "Father Rogel and Brother Báez." The latter is evidently meant for Brother Villarreal.

to produce the fruit we desire in the souls of the natives. Would that the devil, the enemy of the human race, had not hindered us, making use of the Christians themselves as obstacles. For wherever we Spaniards go, we are so proud and haughty, that we crush all before us. Thus the soldiers at the fort began to treat the natives as if they had been conquered in war. They so abuse and oppress them that the Indians refuse to tolerate it. First they [the Indians] counseled them to go away for the land is not suitable for colonization, then, when their counsels were of no avail they set out to kill every Spaniard they could and burn down their towns. Your Paternity may understand that though I had my hands full laboring among Indians so untamed, restless, and evil beyond belief, yet that was nothing compared to my trials when I strove to prevent the soldiers from harming the Indians. Their opposition has been so open that frequently I have confronted them, offering freely to die and threatening that even if they should slay me I should not cease to rebuke their evil deeds. So now they fear me, and though they still do wrong, their crimes are not so many and they try to conceal them from me. In this matter the Captain at Port Carlos has aided me for he has rigorously punished the malefactors. For this our Lord has blessed him, for the land is peaceful, friendship has been unbroken and the Gospel is preached.¹⁰

This letter makes it clear that the evil deeds of the Spanish soldiers were combining with the Indians' native stubbornness, idolatry, and the internal strife among the tribesmen, to prevent any progress for Christianity. Yet there were still other things which hindered the apostolate of Rogel, the most important of which was hunger. The Indians apparently had very little food. They were lazy and inclined not to raise corn and things necessary for their sustenance. Undoubtedly Rogel himself suffered frequently from hunger and from the filthiness characteristic of American Indians. That he begged food for his charges

¹⁰Ugarte gives this letter of Juan Rogel to St. Francis Borgia, dated from Havana July 25, 1568. p. 31.

is clear from the letter, and some corn was sent to him even from the kindly Franciscan Bishop of Yucatán, Fray Francisco Toral.¹¹ Nevertheless, this supply was a long time coming, and Rogel was asked by the captain to go to Havana for supplies.

The padre of Carlos set sail for the purpose of getting the much needed supplies on December 10, 1567.¹² Apparently it was difficult to collect a sufficient amount, because he remained in Cuba for a month. Another reason for the lengthy duration of his stay may have been the demand of the people for his ministrations and the fact that he had to wait for returning boats. If he remained a month it was in January that he started his return journey, this time in the boat with Menéndez Márquez. This distinguished person had a longer trip in mind. When his ships arrived at Carlos, supplies were dropped for the inhabitants of Fort San Antonio, and then the journey was resumed to Tocobago, the garrison on Tampa Bay to the north. For some reason Rogel accompanied the expedition.

When a landing was made at this northern post a scene of horror greeted the eyes of the father and his companions,¹³ - a scene which put to an end the plans of Menéndez for holding

¹¹Kenny, p. 191.

¹²Ibid., p. 198.

¹³Ibid., p. 198, is certainly in error when he says, "surprise awaited him." According to a letter in Ugarte, written in July 1568, Father Rogel knew of the massacre at Tocobago six months before he visited the mission in February, 1569.

the northern country. The Indians had risen in revolt slaying the Spaniards to a man, the last three of the soldiers being killed even as the ships were approaching the shore.¹⁴ The following is Rogel's explanation of the massacre:

The Indians in Tocabago have risen against us for the same reason, and have slain all of the Spaniards there. Some Indian vassals in Carlos who were present told me that the Spaniards who were in Tocabago were cowards and that they killed all of them except the chief and the Captain General. Such wrongs committed by the Spaniards hinder the conversion of the Indians. Before their eyes we Christians practice the contrary to what we preach and hence because of us God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles¹⁵ I am sure that the real cause of this has been oppression.

Rogel evidently loved the natives and wished to see them receive justice, but he was also aware of their shortcomings.

After having slain the Spaniards the Indians fled. Two captives from Carlos' tribe escaped and joined the voyagers from the boats. The landing party could do nothing more than bury the dead, over whom Father Rogel probably read the prayer of the Church. Then the Indian village was burned and the boats withdrew to Carlos.

Here good tidings awaited them. Don Felipe was overjoyed at seeing his rescued tribesmen and threatened revenge on his old enemies. The supplies from the Bishop of Yucatán had arrived, - the much needed corn and other foods which must have

¹⁴Letter cited n. 10.

¹⁵Ibid.

cheered the hearts of all. Soon afterwards bad news filtered into the little garrison. Uprisings and massacres similar to that of Tocobago had taken place in other Spanish settlements and forts. Tegesta was destroyed and a number of soldiers killed. Passion Sunday, just before Lent of the year 1568, Brother Villareal and the garrison arrived at Carlos from Tegesta, which the Spaniards had temporarily abandoned to the ugly mood of the Indians. Since there was danger of the uprising spreading to Carlos, Menéndez Márquez decided that the garrison of fifty men should be increased.¹⁶

While these catastrophes were confronting the Spanish in far off Florida more Jesuits were being sent to help in the evangelization of the country. It might be inferred that the glorious martyrdom of Martínez had inspired a number of the European Jesuits to seek mission life, but this clearly was not the case, because even before news of his death arrived in Europe, Francis Borgia had requested the Spanish provincials to send lists of available religious from whom twenty-four were to be chosen for the Floridas.¹⁷ No doubt the real reasons for sending the new missionaries were the combined appeals of Rogel to the general, the requests of bishops in the Americas for helpers, the requests of the king, and the urging of Menéndez.¹⁸ The new

¹⁶Kenny, p. 192.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 201.

¹⁸Letter of Rogel to Borgia, July 25, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 83.

missionaries were the famous Segura group about which so much has been written in the annals of Florida and the southeast United States.

Father Segura came to America with the title of Vice-Provincial of the Jesuits of Florida. This title indicates a reorganization of the Jesuit missions in America and a new importance of the remote regions known as Florida. The records show that during the year 1567 Philip II had asked Borgia to send Jesuits to Florida, and besides these to send twenty more to Perú.¹⁹ This was more men than the general of the order could furnish from his four Spanish provinces, but Borgia decided that he could send six to Florida and eight to Perú. Accordingly Father Jerónimo Rúiz de Portillo was appointed provincial of Perú, a vast province including both Americas, with jurisdiction over all Jesuits going to the Indies of the king. He set sail with his followers for Lima, Perú, on November 2, 1567, where he was to establish missions and open colleges. When it was evident that Florida was widely separated from the vast province of Perú it was created into a vice-province with Father Segura vice-provincial subject to Lima. This reorganization made Father Rogel a member of the most extensive vice-province and province ever carved out by Jesuit administrators. And it is interesting to note that the instructions given to the provincial stated that if anything happened to father Segura, Rogel was to succeed

¹⁹Astrain, II, 305.

him as vice-provincial.²⁰

The missionaries under Portillo arrived in Lima just before Passion Sunday, 1568, and this was approximately the same time that Segura and his band departed from Spain for Florida.²¹

At some time after his appointment as vice-provincial and before his departure for Florida, Segura must have written a letter of instructions to Rogel, because Rogel in writing to Francis Borgia states: "On receiving the Vice-Provincial's letter ordering me to meet him at the nearest port, I went to San Agustín."²² This statement puts Rogel in a new light and it also explains what has not been clearly stated before, and what has been often stated erroneously. It shows first of all that the Jesuit missionary did not desert the West Florida mission, that he was not discouraged and that he did not intend to give up his work there. When he wrote on July 25, 1568, from Havana, he said that he was still in Carlos.²³ By this he no doubt means that he was still officially stationed at Carlos. In the rest of the letter he gave a number of reasons why the mission was difficult, but he does not imply that he was quitting or that the labor

²⁰Astrain, II, n. 286, and p. 305.

²¹Alegre, I, 17, says Segura left March 13, 1568, but Kenny, p. 205, gives March 11.

²²Ugarte, p. 84.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 81. Lanning, Chapter II, traces the "Failure of the Jesuits," and leaves us to presume that this departure of Rogel's was part of the failure.

among the "energetic, turbulent, and intractable" Indians around Carlos should be abandoned. On the contrary he was hopeful for the future, because he states that "everything in Carlos is at a standstill until the Governor comes," and later he states that he feels certain that "Governor Menéndez will remedy this when he comes."²⁴ If, Rogel argues, the King and Council and Menéndez checked the abuses practiced by the Spanish soldiers on the natives, "it will be easy, with God's help, to convert all the infidels and then Your Paternity can send many laborers, for the harvest is great."²⁵

From these remarks it is clear that Rogel was very optimistic and likewise very zealous for the spread of the Faith. His efforts to have the Indians treated with kindness show him to be a man of great heart. His courage stands out boldly, for he had no inclination to leave a scene which was full of danger to him, since the Indians were not only engrossed in their pagan practices, but were being stirred up to bigoted frenzy at times against the new religion, and at other times to a frenzy of hatred against the Spaniards. Again, Rogel was in a dire predicament, because he had preached against the evil deeds of the soldiers and hence they, too, were aroused against him. All this brings out the stout heart of the missionary who would not desert his station in the face of the most trying conditions. The only thing which

²⁴Ugarte, p. 83.

²⁵Ibid.

could get him to leave his post was a command from his new superior. The consequence of his obedience will be revealed in the next chapter, where it will be evident that Rogel's trip of exploration and his enthusiasm for the Indians on the east coast was a deciding factor in changing the course of the Jesuit missionary activities.

After an absence of some time, Rogel returned to the mission and reestablished all the work of the mission. He was very active in the Segura mission. It is noted in the journal that during the present time he was working the conversion and bringing the people back to the early Christian faith. He was very active in the work and was very successful in his efforts.

Some time after writing to the superior, Rogel and his brother departed from their work at the mission of San Antonio. On receiving a command to meet his superior, Rogel returned for the mission of Segura. The time will now be spent at Segura. While Rogel was at Segura, he was very active in the work and was very successful in his efforts. He was very active in the work and was very successful in his efforts. He was very active in the work and was very successful in his efforts.

According to the journal, Rogel and his brother were very active in the work and were very successful in their efforts. They were very active in the work and were very successful in their efforts. They were very active in the work and were very successful in their efforts.

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CHAPTER VII

AN EXCURSION TO THE NORTH

Many historians have lost sight of the journeys of Rogel, which we have been following, and his work in Florida has been overlooked in view of the larger number of missionaries sent with the Segura mission. It is hoped that the preceding chapter and the present one will clarify his movements and explain his prominence in the early Church history of Florida and thus emphasize what has hitherto been much neglected.

Some time after writing to Rogel, Father Segura and his band departed from Spain on March 13, 1568, bound for San Agustín. On receiving a command to meet his new superior, Rogel set sail for the ancient Florida hamlet. Brother Villarreal remained at Carlos while Rogel took a memorable five months journey the details of which are given in his letters to the general, Francis Borgia, some of which have been recently discovered.¹ Using these letters as sources Father Rogel's work and travels may be readily followed.

According to his statements, Rogel left Carlos on a mail ship bound for the port of San Agustín, sailing around the lower part of Florida and arriving at his destination a week before

¹The letters cited for this may be found in Ugarte, p. 81, dated July 25, 1568, and p. 86, dated November 10, 1568.

Ascension Thursday and some days before the arrival of Segura. Since he had duties of reconnoitering to perform in this interval he remained on the vessel making an inspection tour of the Spanish lands to the north. He visited the province of Guala, whose outpost was situated on what was later known as Amelia Island. He went also to Santa Elena, or St. Helen, and did not get back to San Agustín until July 3, - almost two weeks after Segura had arrived there on June 21.²

Once he had set foot in Guala, which was later to be known as Georgia, and in Santa Elena, which was later to be known as South Carolina, Rogel's eyes were opened to new possibilities for the lands on the eastern seaboard. He says: "There I explored the 'promised land' and found it 'white with the harvest.'"³ He then gives details of what he found in Guala to substantiate his general statement. The native Indians were very friendly as were the chieftains with whom the Spaniards were dealing. There were twenty-three chiefs, he states, while in the whole area there were only fourteen Spanish soldiers, who moved in pairs from one chief to another keeping up the amicable relations. All of their wants were cared for, even to their houses which were built by the Indians. Food was supplied them in abundance. Regarding the

²Letter of Segura to Borgia, July 9, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 79. Regarding these dates, Kenny, p. 220, gives a full account of Segura and those with him, stating without authoritative annotation that Segura reached Florida on June 9, 1568.

³Letter of Rogel to Borgia, Nov. 10, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 87.

dispositions of the natives toward religion Rogel was enthusiastic. "Having witnessed such friendliness and generosity I am convinced that if a Christian zealous for their conversion should live among them and should make the effort, many, even the majority, would soon become Christians."⁴

It must be remarked that the missionary was judging from very slight observation, for he remained with these people only two or three days. Nevertheless he talked with them and asked them many questions. He found that they listened attentively to his remarks about the creation of the world and God and prayer. He discovered that they were eager for the truth and were very inquisitive about the origin and reason for all things. He observed likewise the children's habits of life and found a quality unusual among the early peoples of the Southeast. These inhabitants of Guale were excellent workers, cultivating the land, sowing the crops, and harvesting the corn each in the proper season. Then in the winter they took to the hunt and chase, supplying themselves and the Spaniards with deer and turkeys. He noticed that the land was fertile and capable of producing in abundance and this was important in view of the meagre food supply at Carlos and the necessity of transporting the necessities for life from the islands and Mexico. What struck him as being very important was that the Guale Indians had no idols of sticks and

⁴Letter of Rogel to Borgia, Nov. 10, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 87.

stones, but instead they worshiped the priests of the tribes, who in reality were the rulers. When something was to be done the priest was consulted and action was taken according to his words.⁵

There was no question in Rogel's mind about the suitability of this new land for Christianization. It was in every way a more likely place for missionary work than Carlos. His whole narration contrasts the two groups of inhabitants. He says:

In fine, I found as great a difference between them and the natives of Carlos as between civilized folk and savages. Though they adore the sun, the practices are not as evil nor idolatrous as those of other Indians.⁶

And later he concludes:

In fact I found them so favorably disposed that if the time spent in Carlos had been spent there, much more would have been accomplished.⁷

After surveying the situation at Guale, Rogel continued on his way to Santa Elena which was twenty-two leagues to the north. In this land he learned that the natives were not less disposed to civilization than those of Guale. Previous to his arrival there had been an uprising in the interior during which the Spaniards holding five forts had been slain.⁸ Rogel was convinced that this bloodshed had been provoked by the Spaniards themselves. He asserts that if peaceful people would go among

⁵Letter of Rogel to Borgia, Nov. 10, 1568, in Ugarte, p.87.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 88

the Indians there will be peace, but if soldiers go among them a strong captain will be necessary to check his men from harming the inhabitants. Apparently, Rogel liked the demeanor of the Indians very much, because he defends them against a widespread calumny, saying that there are no cannibals in any part of Florida as yet discovered. After the uprising the chieftains and their people were rendered peaceable once more without the use of the sword and by a single visit to the region by Captain Juan Pardo. While many of the chieftains were friendly along the seaboard, there was possibility of trouble in the interior. Of this country Father Rogel wrote:

Although the natives of the interior are rather hostile, some think that should the Captain of St. Helen go there again, all would be promptly appeased, the more so if they should pardon them from their crime. All I can say of that country is that it has a similar climate and the same qualities as Spain. Its products are the same: wheat, barley, wine and oil. In fact there is a very fine vineyard in St. Helen. Captain Juan Pardo tells me that he saw many olive groves in the interior. The Indians press the olives and anoint their heads with the oil. Guale also has fertile soil and its products are the same as St. Helen. So if colonists come with their families we shall be able to preach the Gospel safely. Your Paternity could then send many Fathers and Brothers for the harvest will suffice for all.⁹

It is clear from what has preceded that Father Rogel was endeavoring to make an exact estimate of the lands and the peoples to the north, in order that the general of the order might determine whether additional Jesuits would be necessary to deal with the situation. It is also clear that Rogel was delighted

⁹Letter of Rogel to Borgia, July 25, 1568, in Ugarte, pp. 85-86.

with the new country, and was probably ready to give up the mission at Carlos. He envisioned a great enterprise and an ideal colony. He was convinced that with good soldiers and a number of missionaries all of the Indian tribes could be converted and taught the ways of civilized peoples. He saw also a haven for Spanish settlers who might develop the land and live peacefully in the New World. In other words, as a zealous missionary he envisioned the possibility of a great Catholic community developing in the Floridas.

For over two days he remained at the fort of Santa Elena, during which time he heard the confessions of the ten soldiers stationed there.¹⁰ Then accompanied by the captain of the fort he proceeded five leagues to a town called Escaméu where he was given a warm reception by the natives who came out in large numbers to welcome him. While standing beside the captain, some of the Indians approached Rogel with complaints against the soldiers who had ill-treated them. The captain appeased them giving satisfaction for the wrongs committed. Rogel was angered at the brutality of the soldiers, and his anger in no wise cooled as the evening wore on. At midnight all were awakened by a dismal sound. Investigation disclosed the sound to be the wails of Indian women from the neighboring village of Oristan who had come to beg the garrison at Escaméu to protect them from the soldiers.

¹⁰Letter of Rogel to Borgia, July 25, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 85.

who had raided their wigwams. The captain sent a soldier to reprehend the raiders, and the very next day he deposed the commanding officer and appointed a new one.¹¹

What sleep Rogel got for the rest of the night we do not know. He returned the next day to Santa Elena and from there left for San Agustín, completing his tour of inspection. When he arrived on July 3, he was "greatly consoled by the sight of the Vice-Provincial and my dear Fathers and Brothers."¹² Overjoyed he expressed his gratitude to the general and to God for sending new laborers into the land, and in his happiness and hopefulness he invited all to come to the land "flowing with milk and honey," censuring himself for not having invited them sooner to share in his apostolic trials and labors, and carrying of the cross. In another letter he repeated his requests and begged that more men be sent to the field of Florida:

Wherefore, as so many Jesuits desire this mission and rightly so, for it is very much to God's glory and for the consolation of those who sincerely follow in the way of the cross, as I have been told, I implore Your Paternity to open the door to those so desiring, that they may come and help us in a ministry redounding to God's glory and the welfare of souls. . . . For the love of God, now that this work has begun, and to all appearances begun well, assist us by commending us to Our Lord in your Holy Sacrifices and prayers, as well as by sending us companions to aid us in this vineyard of the Lord.¹³

¹¹Letter of Rogel to Borgia, July 25, 1568, in Ugarte, p.85.

¹²Ibid., p. 86.

¹³Letter of Rogel to Borgia, Nov. 10, 1568, in Ugarte, p.89.

The newcomers were Father Bautista de Segura, Father Gonzalo del Alamo, Father Antonio Sedeño, Brothers Juan de la Carrera, Pedro de Lineres, and Domingo Agustín Báez or Váez.¹⁴ It may readily be supposed that Father Rogel was anxious to hear the news from the land of his birth and it was conveyed to him by his companions. Undoubtedly, some time was spent in consultation about the prospects in the Jesuit missionary field, and the newcomers were eager to hear the details recounted by Father Rogel, who was most familiar with the problems before them, the difficulties that might arise for those laboring in these regions in regard to the conversion of the infidels and the consciences of the faithful.¹⁵ Rogel's glowing account of the scenes of his recent visitation must have impressed Segura, for the latter wrote at once¹⁶ to the general and informed him that he was thinking of sending some of the fathers and three or four of the catechists to Guale.

San Agustín, when the fathers held their conference there, was a forbidding hamlet by the sea. The soldiers and colonists were reported to have been worn out and emaciated. They were

¹⁴Kenny, pp. 205-209, gives an account of each of the new missionaries. Ugarte, pp. 64-65, discusses the four boys or young men who were to be catechists. Lanning, p. 42, states that ten missionaries came with Segura and the names given on his list differ from the other writers.

¹⁵Ugarte, p. 89.

¹⁶This letter of Segura to Francis Borgia, July 9, 1568, may be found in Ugarte, pp. 79-81.

pallid, weak, exposed to hunger.¹⁷ Death by starvation on the cheerless sand flats seemed eminent. To these physical wants the fathers gave as many of their supplies as they could spare, and then, their conferences finished, the missionaries sailed away on July 10, 1568. They were bound for Havana which had been designated by Segura as the base of missionary activities.¹⁸ On board the boat was the Indian chief of Tegesta together with his cousin and four other Florida Indians. The former had been to Spain with Pedro Menéndez, and was now returning after having promised that all of his people would become Christians.¹⁹

As the ship passed along the coast of Tegesta some Indians were seen fishing, and the Vice-Provincial sent for them "to come to talk with us telling them they could come safely to our ship."²⁰ Some came and were delighted to see the Indians who had lately returned from Spain alive and well. They had believed that the Spaniards had killed them in revenge for the uprisings at the settlement at Tegesta.

Father Rogel's account continues:

When we regaled them with refreshments we had brought from Spain they willingly promised to tell their relatives of the arrival of the two. The next day they went to find these relatives who also came to the ship where they were given

¹⁷Alegre, I, 19.

¹⁸Letter of Rogel to Borgia, July 25, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 81.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 83.

²⁰Ibid.

the same reception. When the two Indians and some of our men landed, the whole town came down to the beach carrying a cross. There they supplied us with plenty of water and were delighted to talk to their relatives. All received refreshments from the ship and went away joyously to tell the news to the chief of Tecueta (sic), the brother of one of the Indians who had returned from Spain. When at night-fall the wind freshened, as we had long desired, the pilot did not wish to delay longer. So the two who had landed to speak to the chief of Tecueta, who could not be told of their arrival right away, remained behind. They told us that they would assemble all the principal natives They would try to have a church built there for the Father who was coming So the two stayed in their country while we went on to Havana.²¹

There is no other delay recorded for the voyage to Havana, nor is there any account of what happened during the time between July 10 and July 25. From the date of Rogel's letter it is apparent that the Jesuits were in their lodgings in Havana by this latter date. Rogel's excursion to the north was concluded, and with the advice he had given and the experience he had had the Jesuits set about establishing their mission base in Havana.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST JESUIT RECTOR IN HAVANA

When the fathers of the Segura mission, as it was called, sailed into the port of Havana, which was well known by this time to Rogel but was a novelty to the others, they had definite plans to follow. Yet things moved slowly at first, because shortly after their arrival all were stricken with fever in this semi-tropical town which appeared at first so healthy.¹ The first part of the Jesuits' program consisted of establishing a headquarters from which the fathers could make their journeys to the Florida Indians and at which they might hold consultations. The next step was to found a college for the boys of the islands, for the training of young Jesuits destined for the missions, and for the sons of the Indians who might be brought from Florida. When this was accomplished individual missionaries must be assigned their fields of labor in the north.²

The religious house was soon established and a church was given over to the Jesuits. Rogel states that religious discipline was immediately inaugurated, and on the first of August

¹Letter of Segura to the General, Nov. 18, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 96.

²Ibid.

all of the Jesuits renewed their vows.³ Brother Villarreal was ordered to come back from Carles. There is no doubt about the careful planning of the Jesuits for their mission and the great seriousness with which they went about their preparations.

We four fathers discussed the difficulties that might arise for those laboring in these regions in regard to the conversion of the infidels and the consciences of the faithful. We met twice a day for a month and a half consulting various authors and studying them carefully. Thus we solved and explained many cases, a great help to me, for, being alone, I had many doubts and difficulties.⁴

So spoke Rogel. What they discussed during these many hours of conference may well have been the details necessary to carry out the various instructions given to them by the provincial, Portillo of Papá, and by the general Borgia.⁵ If these conferences lasted for a month and a half after August 1, it was the middle of September before the plans were concluded. During this time appointments had to be made, the first of which was for the rectory of the Jesuit house of Havana. Father Segura made the choice.

I thought it according to God's will that Father Rogel remain here as rector because he is experienced in the government of the Society and is esteemed by all on account of his virtue and age.⁶

³ This statement may be found in the letter from Rogel to Borgia, Nov. 10, 1568, in Ugarte, p. 89.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For items of the instructions see Kenny, pp. 201-204.

⁶ Letter of Segura to General, Nov. 18, 1568, in Ugarte,

And he continues further in the same letter to the General:

"The school must have a Rector, for which office Father Rogel is very well suited."⁷ There is reason enough in these two statements to conclude that Rogel was held in high esteem and the vice-provincial depended upon him to manage and to build the base of the Jesuit enterprise in the New World. But Rogel, while he was perfectly obedient, appears to have felt this blow at his cherished desire to be off to Florida, for he says:

Reverend Father Vice-Provincial has ordered me, useless and unworthy as I am of being in Florida, for while there I did not appreciate the boon, to reside here with him in order that when he makes his visitation I may remain as his substitute. God knows, if the choice were left to me, how much I would prefer to be in Florida than here, and how great the consolation I received there, and how willingly I would choose to be there rather than anywhere else in the world.⁸

The ardent wish of Rogel, now burdened with the task of directing his small community and arranging for the beginnings of the college, seemed a long way from fulfillment, but quite unexpectedly it was in part satisfied. It happened that Father Segura in making the other appointments, decided that Father Alamo should go to Carlos and take with him Brother Villarreal, who had come to Havana in the middle of August.⁹ But Alamo never got to Florida, for just as he was preparing to leave, he was again stricken with the fever, which continued until his early

⁷Ugarte, p. 98.

⁸Letter of Rogel to Borgia, Nov. 10, 1568, in Ugarte, p.94.

⁹Ibid., p. 89.

departure for Spain. Since the soldiers at Carlos had to be confessed, Rogel was sent in his stead. Segura ordered him to go by way of Tegesta and Los Mártires, for the purpose of determining the dispositions of the Indians there toward Christianity and especially to find out how they were getting along with their Christian chieftain. It will be recalled that this ruler on his return from Spain had promised to build a church and houses for the Spaniards. Rogel was also instructed to bring back with him children to attend the school in Havana, from all three places of his visitation.¹⁰

Rogel left Havana on September 22, but since Captain Pedro Menéndez was managing the expedition, Rogel's plans had to be changed. Carlos was the first port of call and it was planned to return by way of Tegesta and Los Mártires. Storms and winds buffeted the craft to such an extent that whereas the journey to Carlos ordinarily took two days, this one required ten. A storm was raging when they entered the harbor and one of the ships almost foundered in the shallows. A great number of passengers might have been drowned had it not been for the skill of the mariner Captain Menéndez who brought them safely to shore.¹¹

On landing, the incoming father was greeted by a most gruesome spectacle. The Indians were holding a festival and a closer

¹⁰ibid., p. 90.

¹¹ibid.

view revealed that they were dancing around the heads of four of the under-chieftains who had recently been slain for participation in a plot to overthrow the head chief, Philip or Felipe. It may be mentioned that when Rogel first came to the land of Carlos, he was greeted by a chief of that name, who had been set up as king by the Spaniards, that is to say, by Menéndez. Carlos had later been executed by the Spaniards for plotting sedition and Philip had been set up in his place. Consequently Philip depended upon the Spanish soldiers for his power. Gradually, he strengthened his position among his people, but many of his vassal chiefs harbored a deep hatred of him, plotting constantly for his life. In self-defense Philip had been obliged to kill his rivals, one by one, until fifteen had been exterminated.¹² On the day of Rogel's arrival four had been killed at once. Thus Philip became supreme. Upon him the conversion of the whole region depended, and he made many promises to aid the settlement of Spaniards and the Christianisation of his followers, but would do nothing until the return of the Governor Menéndez. He promised to become a Christian at that time, but until then he would allow no one to receive baptism for he wished to be the first to enter the faith.

In the near future, then, there appeared a ray of hope for the land, but Rogel was also aware of the fickleness of the king and of the danger to his existence as supreme ruler. There

¹²Ibid., p. 91.

probably was more sorrow than disappointment when the promises of Philip ultimately did not reach fulfillment.

After hearing the confessions of the soldiers, Rogel continued his stay at Carlos for eight days. Then the trip to Tegesta was begun. For six days the ships awaited a favorable wind; provisions ran low and it became necessary to return to Havana. Before the return Rogel had received good news from the other side of Florida. An Indian had arrived from Tegesta saying that all was well with the new Christian chief. All his people were favorable to the Christians. Huts had been built for them, and every day they went out to the point to look for the white sails of the coming Spaniards.¹³ With this good news Rogel returned to his Vice-Provincial, presumably some time after the middle of October. He found that Segura and the others stricken by the fever during his absence were now quite recovered.

In Havana the pious citizens provided alms for the Jesuits, and the Church of San Juan was conceded to them for their ministries. "Here in the interior of their poor house they gave themselves up to the exercise of religious perfection and soon filled the city with the sweet odor of their virtues."¹⁴ Segura had long before obtained a promise of aid from the royal exchequer for the foundation of a seminary for Florida Indians, which due to the intercession of the adelantado and the permissions of the

¹³Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁴Alogre, I, 19.

king and the Jesuit general was progressing hopefully. The fathers and brothers teaching the few Indians and the children of the town spent their free moments in various ways. Instructors were sent among the negro slaves of the island. Some preached in the public squares after passing through the streets singing the doctrine with the children. Others engaged themselves in preaching to the soldiers in their quarters, to the prisoners in the jail, and to the sick in the hospital.¹⁵ Since Rogel was pastor of the church, rector of the house, and director of the school, we may be sure that he himself performed many of these duties during the remainder of the year 1588. During the whole time he was praying for reinforcements and begging Francis Borgia to send more teachers for the school and missionaries to aid in the work in Florida.

At the end of the year Rogel received a very encouraging letter from the general:

Very Reverend Father in Christ: The Peace of Christ. The greater are the labors which your reverence has been undergoing in these beginnings, which to the eyes of men seem sterile, the greater (is) the assurance our Lord gives that the means and the end will be full of flowers and spiritual fruits, with great rejoicing on the part of those who now behold the aridness (of the field); and they will say of Florida that the sterile has given more fruits than the land which was fertile. This is the winter: the snows and rains that fall on the newly planted fields and the plow that hides the sown seed in the spring, will show that they were not as dangerous as they seemed, because they will bring the verdure of hope If it is

¹⁵Alegre, I, 20.

Florida flowers may be expected; and if it is the vine of the Lord fruit may be expected¹⁶

This letter continues in an encouraging strain, mentioning the school and the work being done by Rogel and his helpers. Perhaps Rogel needed just such inspiration, for his superior and others had departed from Havana for the north land he had wanted to visit. The story of the departure of Segura and of the events following has been told in greater or less detail by Shea, Lowery, Kenny, and Lanning. What concerns us more is the progress of Rogel who was left behind.

Segura, according to Rogel,¹⁷ departed for Tegesta on November 2, acting upon the good news which had been brought back by Rogel from Carlos. The vice-provincial wished to inspect the land personally. He and Sedeño and one of the catechists did not go far beyond Matanzas, seven leagues from Havana, before they put in to port. The journey was halted temporarily and evidently Segura returned to Havana and was there on November 18 when he wrote a letter to the general. Soon after this he again departed. Rogel informs us of the reason, namely, that Segura was not satisfied with the small house, and the site in Havana, which was rather "unhealthy, although the country itself is not. Consequently the Vice-Provincial is opposed to our residing here."¹⁸ This is the first inkling we get of the Jesuit

¹⁶Epistolae Borgia, IV, 688-690.

¹⁷Letter of Rogel to Borgia, Nov. 10, 1568, in Ugarte, p.93.

¹⁸Ibid.

dissatisfaction with Menéndez, who apparently had not provided them with the promised building and school. Moreover, things were much delayed by Menéndez' continual traveling. Segura informs us that "we are awaiting the arrival of the Governor whom we expect any day, before choosing a site There are many extensive, suitable locations within the town limits along the shore where the climate is healthy."¹⁹

Unhealthy as the place was, Rogel remained there and he makes no mention of illness befalling him, while the vice-provincial had been stricken several times within the four months of his sojourn in Havana. When Segura and Sedeño arrived at Tegesta they both wrote to Rogel.²⁰ Then steering for the north they departed only to run into a bad storm off Cape Cañaveral which forced them to return to Tegesta. There Sedeño remained while Father Segura went to San Agustín. On February 5, 1569, Rogel stated that he had not heard from Segura. Moreover he was anxious about him and about the school. An offer had been made of sufficient money to begin the new building, and the governor was urging that the work begin.²¹

¹⁹Letter of Segura to General, in Ugarte, p. 99.

²⁰Letter of Rogel to Borgia, February 5, 1569, in Ugarte, pp. 102-104. The letter of Sedeño is on pp. 105-106. The latter states that they left Matanzas on December 4 and arrived at Tegesta three days later.

²¹Ugarte, pp. 102-104.

But affairs were not destined to move swiftly, as the spring of 1569 wore on. Rogel was no doubt continuing his ministries, when the vice-provincial returned with his mind made up about the future of the missions. Writing under date of June 19, 1569, he appraised his general of the fact that he had spent almost all of his time sailing from one region to another.²²

Amid perils on land and sea he had learned much about American conditions and had decided that Carlos must be abandoned, that his subjects should go to Guale and to Santa Elena, as Rogel had suggested a year before. At the time this was written Rogel had apparently brought the building program to such a pass that the enclosure was marked off. The rector must have been highly impatient with these delays, even though he says nothing to indicate it. A very human note creeps into the letter of Segura. "While writing I have been suddenly attacked by severe pains in the stomach, wherefore Father Juan Rogel concludes it in his own hand." Only one sentence follows: "May all be pleasing to His Divine Majesty and may He grant us His Holy love and Grace, Amen."²³

²²Letter of Segura to Borgia, June 19, 1569, Ugarte, p.107.

²³Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

MISSIONARY HARDSHIPS

Much has been written about the work of the Jesuits in Florida during the time of Menéndez. It might be said that the story of their attempt at Christianizing the native Indians and their failure to make an impression upon their hard hearts, has been sufficiently gone over. But much of this story from the viewpoint of Father Rogel has been hidden. Father Martinez and Father Segura and the others who gave their lives that Christianity might spring from martyrs' blood, were visionaries in a way, more eager to make the supreme sacrifice of their lives immediately. Rogel, however, was rather matter-of-fact. He was willing to sacrifice himself and even his life. No one may question his courage. Still, he wanted to get results. He came to convert the natives by his teaching and example. He came also to labor hard for this purpose. And hence when he saw it could not be achieved, he was practical enough to face the fact. It was owing to his letters and his estimate of the native mentality and morality, in fact, it was owing to his judgment that the Jesuits left that place forever. And this part of the story of the Jesuits in Florida is new. It is clear that the members of the Society did not, as Lanning states, fail, but rather that the superiors in Europe perceived the hard-headed reasoning of Father

Rogel, and, instead of sending more victims to the obdurate savages, adopted the verdict, reached by the observing Rogel, namely, that the Indians were impossible.

So it was that the work of the Jesuits in Florida in the Sixteenth Century came to a close. Not a priest remained in the country. The stupid savagery of the aborigines, the inhospitable country in which they lived, the difficulty of gaining sufficient supplies to feed the missionaries and the increasing danger from English and French corsairs all conspired to defeat the dream of spiritual conquests in Florida. To this in October, 1572, was added the death of St. Francis Borgia and with him passed the last hope of the missions of Florida. But the details of this story are longer in the telling.

By the middle of June, 1569, it was becoming clear to Segura after his many days on seas and in wild lands looking over the prospects for missionary labors that some drastic move would have to be made. He saw that there were five doors open to his workers in Florida, Carlos, Los Mártires, Tegesta, Gualé, and Santa Elena. Some of these places, controlled by Spanish presidios, were in a rather precarious position because the Jesuits could not depend upon the fickle tribesmen, especially upon such a puppet king as Philip of Carlos. Gualé and Santa Elena seemed to be better prospects, for Menéndez was bringing colonists to those regions, and as has been stated, Rogel thought the Indians there to be well disposed.

In Havana things had reached a stalemate. The promised house and college had not materialized and the money promised for the foundation had not been granted. Alms from generous individuals could not forever sustain the Jesuits, and at any time supplies might run low on the island.¹ It is obvious that something had come between Menéndez and the Jesuits. The letters of Rogel, Segura and Sedeño show a change in attitude toward the governor and his project of colonization in Florida.²

Father Segura even wrote to the general that the fathers might go beyond Guale and Santa Elena "to China, for the Indians have found a route."³ All of these factors seem to indicate that the vice-provincial wished to get away from Havana and even from the jurisdiction of Menéndez, as Father Ugarte suggests in his introduction to the Jesuit letters.⁴ He stayed, however, until the summer of 1569 before abandoning all hope of building up a missionary center at Havana. Then it was that he and the others set sail for the provinces of Guale and Santa Elena to establish in all appearances a new headquarters on the mainland in closer communication with the missions.

¹Alegre, I, 23.

²A determination of this point is a study in itself and the writer understands that a thesis on the subject is in preparation.

³Letter of Segura to Borgia, December 18, 1569, in Ugarte, p. 109.

⁴Ugarte, p. 62.

The precise dates of the departure from Havana and the arrival of the various missionaries at Guale and Santa Elena are not known, but Rogel, writing at a later date, says that a house was established at Santa Elena in June, 1569.⁵ Rogel was forthwith sent to the village of Oriza about five leagues distant from Santa Elena. Lanning states the case differently, saying:

Menendez, never ready to let the spiritual conquest lag behind the political, ordered the Jesuit Rogel (the first resident priest of South Carolina) to Santa Elena, where he ministered to the Spanish settlers, the soldiers and the natives of the Orista province.⁶

From the words of Rogel we may be sure that no second order was necessary, for he hastened to his station consoled by the thought that once more he was in the missionary vineyard.

These Indians seemed much superior to those at Carlos and Father Rogel was, at first, enthusiastic about his new charge. To him the northern barbarians appeared to be neither "base, cruel nor thievish."⁷ He reported that they married only one woman, were neat in their houses, careful with the cultivation of their land; that they educated their children, spoke the truth, sought peace and preserved cleanliness. Here with the help of three young men, who had accompanied him, Father Rogel built a house

⁵Kenny, p. 251, gives the letter.

⁶Lanning, p. 44, states that the village of Orista or Oriza was situated twelve leagues from the fort of Santa Elena.

⁷Kenny, p. 251.

for himself and a church for the community. Feeling sure that he would be able to save the souls of these savages the father set himself energetically to the task of learning their language and in six months was able to preach to them in their own tongue, telling them about the love of good, the abhorrence of evil, reward and punishment, the immortality of the soul and universal resurrection.⁸

Menéndez, noting the apparent success of the fathers at their various stations, brought two hundred and seventy-three settlers to the country. But the progress of these missions which had started so auspiciously, soon met with catastrophe. An epidemic broke out among the natives and the missionaries were compelled to spend hours and days ministering to the sick and dead until many of their own ranks came down with the plague. Fortunately only one of the brothers, Domingo Báez, died.⁹

As long as the Indians profited by the presence of the Jesuits they remained friendly but as soon as the plague had spent itself all their docility and gratitude passed away. Their hearts seemed as hard and as cruel as the Indians at Carlos. Food was scarce, and with the ripening of acorns the savages left their villages to scatter through the forests. Father Rogel began to be discouraged having worn himself out aiding their sick during the plague. He followed his charges into the wilderness, and

⁸Lanning, p. 44; Kenny, pp. 251-252.

⁹Alegre, I, 23-24.

whenever he learned that they intended to congregate for some celebration in the forest he was present to continue his labors. He pursued his charges with every kindness, but the Indians only resented his preaching and laughed at the padre.

Regel planned to thwart this Indian habit of scattering through the forest by establishing a hamlet surrounded by farm land. Surely if sufficient ground was planted around the village to support the people they would remain. For this agricultural venture the father had only three hoes, and so he explained his need to Estévan de las Alas, the commandant at Santa Elena, and five more were furnished him. Twenty houses were now constructed on the site Father Regel had selected for the town, but only a few of the savages would consent to live in them. They preferred to wander the woods. With a heavy heart Father Regel settled down to teach the beloved Catholic truths to the few who had remained.¹⁰

Probably one thing which helped to alienate the Indians was father Regel's description of the devil, which corresponded to an ancestral god of the red men. Even the Indian families who had remained, moved away when the subject of the devil was explained. Regel's account of the misunderstanding is as follows:

Then I gave them to understand how they are to believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and why Christians venerate the Cross. After spending five months among them, they showed me great kindness and friendliness, because I defended them as much as I could, and they were well pleased to have us as interpreters.

¹⁰Lanning, p. 46.

I seemed to have won their good will, and I began to tell them that, as children of God, they had to be enemies of the devil, for the devil is bad and loves all bad things, and God is good and loves all that is good. When I began to talk in this strain, they were so vexed and so heartily disliked all that I said, that they no longer showed any willingness to come and hear me. They told the youths with me that they were very angry and did not believe anything that I said, because I spoke evil of the devil, who was very good and there was nothing better. Then these two families made preparations to move away, and when I asked them the reason they told me that it was because of my hard sayings against the devil.¹¹

The Indians were apparently bent upon getting away from the restrictions of both Christianity and the Spanish leaders. To this desire was now added another motive and a justification for a more warlike procedure on their part. The Spanish officials acting against the advice of Rogel proposed to quarter the soldiers of the several garrisons upon the natives, at the very inopportune moment when food and grain were scarce.¹² True to Rogel's predictions, the Indians became so enraged that it was useless to attempt any further missionary work and there was danger that as on other occasions the forts might be burned and the garrisons and settlers slain.

Rogel's heart must have been heavy when the truth finally came home to him that these natives like these at Carles were impossible. He called those few of the faithful around him and told them he would return. To the renegades he bade adieu without reproach. Then he demolished his little house and church. Packing

¹¹Kenny, p. 253.

¹²Lanning, p. 46.

up his few belongings and books and gathering up his few miserable hoes, he went back to Santa Elena on July 13, 1570.¹³ The Indians after their jeers, admitted, as Lanning says, "that he retired from among them with serenity and dignity which, we now know, baffled many another Indian." And thus Rogel came to remain at Santa Elena for awhile.

Rogel later wrote his account of these incidents and gave his opinion of the Indians. For this he is called pessimistic by Kenny and cynical by Lanning. Under the circumstances and without looking toward the glorification of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina it seems now to us that his letter exhibits his rare common sense. He was willing to admit he had overestimated both the Spanish officers and the traits of the natives.

While Rogel was wrestling with this problem for months at Orista the vice-provincial was preparing for another mission far to the north in what was later known as Chesapeake Bay, probably near the site of the present city of Washington. The reasons for this move have been given earlier in this chapter and to these were now added other motives. The Indians at Guale and Santa Elena were not different from those in the rest of Florida. The occasion for establishing a mission in a northern latitude was due to an Indian, Don Luis, who had been taken to Spain from that

¹³Letter of Juan Rogel to Hinistrosa used by Lanning, p. 47; Kenny, p. 255; John Gilmary Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States (New York, 1886-1892), I, 145.

region. The Indian, impressing Philip II, king of Spain, had sailed back to America with a company of Dominicans, who, he hoped, would convert his people to Christianity. For some unknown reason the Dominican missionaries to Florida were stopped, and the zealous red man next presented his plans to the Jesuits.¹⁴

With such an intelligent Indian, versed in the ways of both red men and white, and professing Catholic faith, the vice-provincial had an exceptional opportunity to introduce Christianity into a new country. At Santa Elena a meeting of all the missionaries was called and volunteers were requested for the new mission in the land of Luis. Father Regel and the others offered their services, but finally Father Segura himself determined to lead the expedition in person.

It was a well organized party with Fathers and Brothers, the converted Indian, Don Luis as guide, and a boy, Alonso, the son of a Spaniard at Santa Elena. They set sail during the latter part of August, 1570, and on September 11 dropped anchor in Chesapeake Bay.¹⁵ As is well known Father Segura immediately ordered the vessel back to Santa Elena with instructions to return with supplies in four months. This peremptory order was doubtless given to prevent the usual trouble which occurred when

¹⁴Alegre, I, 25, gives a full account of Don Luis.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 26. Lanning, p. 50, says they sailed away on August 5 and landed September 10; Alegre, I, 26, gives the time of departure and arrival as we have stated.

soldiers and sailors were allowed to mingle among natives. In the returning boat were father Rogel and Sedeño. Rogel was to return to Havana and Sedeño to Santa Elena.¹⁶

The story of the Segura mission into Virginia is too well told in other places for a repetition here. Segura and his band went on to their deaths, and Rogel did not know during his return trip that this was a final parting with his vice-provincial. The Indians appeared overjoyed to see Don Luis returned to them alive and well and they welcomed the fathers as his deliverers. Don Luis was rightful heir to the rustic throne and his younger brother was ruling in his absence. This brother graciously offered Don Luis the scepter but this honor was declined generously. Don Luis seemed to be a man after the padres' own hearts and they reported him to have said:

I have not come to despoil you of your dominions, but only to contribute to the zeal of these pious men, who leaving their homeland and sacrificing themselves to great labors, come to announce to us the reign of the living God of whom I wish to be one of the most sincere adorers.¹⁷

Everything went well until one day Don Luis appeared in native costume, stating that this was merely to draw his people closer to the missionaries. But it was soon evident that it was impossible for the Indian to resume his savage raiment without assuming also a savage soul. The licentious ways of his people had tempted Luis. Their liberty appealed to him. As cacique he

¹⁶Kenny, p. 262.

¹⁷Alegre, I, 27.

was entitled to more than one wife and he proceeded to take his rights. Threats and tears from the good fathers were of no avail. Evil and corruption had taken deep root in the heart of the red man. The apostate moved from the village and established his abode fifteen miles away. No entreaties could persuade him to return.

Deprived of an interpreter, the missionaries left alone in a rude hut in the vast solitude were reduced to a deplorable situation. They could look upon themselves no otherwise than as victims destined for the sacrifice. Describing the preparation for their martyrdom Alegre wrote:

Prayer, reading, works of penance and fervent conversations, meditation on the life of glory, and above all the Sacred Table to which they went humbly and devoutly on most days, were the only foods by which they were sustained, and these were their very corporate nourishment also because the bark expected at the end of four months from Havana was delayed.¹⁸

In February, with little hope left, Father Segura sent three of his followers to the village of the treacherous Don Luis as a last effort to get the black sheep back into the fold. The chieftain received the emissaries in an apparent friendly manner, and promised to return in the morning but when night overtook the messengers, Don Luis and his warriors killed them to a man. Their fate was unknown to Father Segura, but he could not help suspecting the worst. A few days later some Indians stopped at his hut to borrow the few axes and machetes owned by the fathers. With

¹⁸Alegre, I, 28.

these they departed for the hills where they encountered and promptly killed one of the brothers who was gathering fire wood with which to cook the missionaries' simple fare. From his body the brother's garb was stripped and Don Luis wore it when he rushed with his savages upon the defenseless religious, killing all five of them with their own tools.

Only Alonzo, the boy, was spared and although he hoped and expected to be killed with his religious companions, the cacique sheltered him. With a maturity far beyond his years, Alonzo, influenced the savages to dig a long grave in the chapel where Mass had been said by the missionaries before their martyrdom, and here they were interred with honor, Alonzo reciting with tears, some of the prayers which the padres had taught him.¹⁹

Rogel and Sedeño, together with Rogel's inveterate companion Brother Villarreal and three other brothers, having followed the superior's injunction sailed away toward Havana, where during the days in which Segura was being brought to his doom, Rogel exercised his ministries. According to the express command of Father Segura he was to wait for four months before coming to Santa María, the port of Axacáan, with supplies. As soon as the opportunity arrived he set sail with Vicente González as pilot and Brother Juan de Salcedo as a companion. This must have been some time after the martyrdoms of Segura and his companions which took place on February 4 and 9, 1571, and consequently must have

¹⁹Alegre, I, 32.

been beyond the time limit of four months. The reason for the delay was probably the presence of pirates.

The relief ship arrived in the Chesapeake region but none of the signals agreed upon were given from the shore. Instead the barbarians garbed themselves in the robes of the slain fathers and walking along the beach called out, "Come, here are the fathers whom you seek."²⁰

It must have been amazing to the father and the sailors to see two Indians swim out to the boat as lures for a landing party. But the captain was wary, and with sad hearts they drew away and returned to Havana. On the journey one of the two Indians escaped by leaping overboard, and the other could not be induced to reveal the secret of Axacan.

When Rogel arrived at Havana he found the adelantado had come to San Agustín from Spain. Father Sedeño was representing the Jesuits there. To him much depended upon the success of the Segura mission, and apparently he thought the whole success of his conquest depended upon the Jesuits and missions. He was in high anger over the slayings. And thus it was that he soon decided

²⁰Alegre, I, 34, quoting from an old and lost letter of Rogel's. Lanning, pp. 54-55, has several errors in his account of this expedition. He calls the Jesuits friars; says the expedition started from Santa Elena; and his dates for the martyrdom are wrong. Kenny, p. 281, says Segura was killed February 9, five days after Quiros. Ugarte, p. 67, says Quiros was killed February 2, and Segura six days afterwards.

upon another expedition to be led by himself into the region of Axacáan, or the present Rappahannock. But this could not be undertaken for many months. The pirate warfare conducted by English seamen was growing constantly more menacing. John Hawkins had been badly thrashed by the Spanish fleet before the harbor of Vera Cruz and barely escaped with his life. The French and English corsairs were particularly hostile to the Jesuits and while Father Rogel was conducting his school at Havana during 1570 and 1571, and worrying, no doubt about the fate of Father Segura, Jesuit refugees were arriving in Cuba full of tales of desperate escapes from pirates on the seas.²¹ The waters of upper Florida were becoming doubly dangerous for missionaries of the Catholic faith. Moreover, Menéndez wanted the school begun in Havana and hence Rogel and the brothers were again put to teaching the Indian boys.²² It seems that it was not until August 1572 that Menéndez was able to set out once more to discover the fate of the colony in the Chesapeake. Father Rogel and Brothers Villarreal and Carrera accompanied him.

There is another and different story told about this expedition by Father Sedeño and it is well worth considering since it throws considerable light upon Rogel's initiative. The details are not clear but they are all given in a letter of Father Antonio

²¹Kenny, p. 264.

²²Ibid., p. 262.

Sedeño to Francis Borgia under date of February 8, 1572.²³ The adelantado had returned from Spain to San Agustín; from there he went to Santa Elena and picked up Father Sedeño who was ill, bringing him back to the fort. He and Sedeño evidently were at odds about sending the relief boat to Axacan. Menéndez refused absolutely to let the boat go during the winter, and Sedeño "not wanting to quarrel with him did not insist."²⁴ Then he wrote to Havana to Rogel telling him he should do nothing until May of 1572.

Rogel had other ideas about the matter. Apparently he was disgusted with the repeated unfulfilled promises of Menéndez. Segura had told him to send the boat and send it he would. Clearly, since it was not known what had happened to Segura, Rogel was right in not paying any attention to Sedeño's order and the wishes of Menéndez. So he packed up the supplies and sent them in a ship with Brother Carrera. But here is the way in which Sedeño explains the matter to the general of the Jesuits:

Having thus resolved to conform, I wrote Father Rogel what had happened and that he should do nothing until May of the coming year 1572. I told him that then I intended to make the journey as I would be in the neighborhood and would inform Father Bautista [Segura] of everything if necessary. But the good father thought, I do not know on what grounds, that he should reprovise the ship and send it back with Brother Carrera This was very inconvenient, for although I had written him of the Governor's attitude, and had ordered him not to send any provisions nor a brother, since I was going to Jacan, nevertheless he

²³Letter of Sedeno to Borgia, Feb. 8, 1572, in Ugarte, pp. 112-116; Kenny, p. 285, summarizes the event.

²⁴Ugarte, p. 113.

judged otherwise. In order that the ship might return, he complained before a public notary of the Governor of Havana, his nephew, and to the King's officers. Again he caused them much annoyance by his requests that the ship be provisioned for a return voyage, not considering, if he considered anything at all, . . . the . . . bad . . . weather . . . of winter. He did not realize that all he did was futile and without rhyme or reason, that he did but exasperate the Governor and the officials and alienate them when we need their favor. Withal he sent the ship giving me no reason. The only answer I received to what I wrote was that it was proper to go and find our Fathers, basing this on some new kind of obedience perhaps, of which I knew nothing.

The Governor was very much surprised . . . He said that even if King Philip were in the same danger as our fathers, even though he should be beheaded, he would not be so rash as to sail in such foul weather. I tried to palliate Father Rogel's fault. . . .²⁵

For one Jesuit to denounce another in this manner is serious, but Rogel was entirely in the right and more loyal to his superior than Sedeño would have been or than Menéndez would have been to his king. There was no bickering with anybody on Rogel's part. Sedeño had no right to give him orders, because it was not proven that Segura was dead, and again because Rogel was rector of the Jesuits of Havana, while Sedeño was head of the missionary group. Moreover, it is stated later in the letter that because of Rogel's rash move all of the food was lost. It is true the food and corn were lost, and all the wine, oil, butter, meat and steak, which Rogel had faithfully gathered in Havana. But it was lost on the journey back to Havana, because Menéndez and Sedeño would not go to aid the Segura missionaries.

²⁵Letter of Sedeño to Bergia, Feb. 8, 1572, in Ugarte, pp. 113-114.

When after many vicissitudes Sedeño and Menéndez returned to Havana they were met by Rogel and on July 30, 1572, they all set out on a large relief expedition to the region of the Chesapeake, or Axacán. Menéndez had a capable force of soldiers which landed at Axacán, and the search began. Rogel, writing from the Bay of the Mother of God, the Chesapeake, on August 28, 1572, described what happened.²⁶ There was fighting between the soldiers and the Indians. The hostile chieftains were captured but the treacherous Don Luis could not be found. Friendly natives gave up the boy Alonso who recounted the only known story of the massacre. All conclusive evidence of the martyrdom of the fathers and brothers and the treasonable actions of the chiefs were gathered. Trials were held and eight leaders were sentenced to be hanged at the yardarm. Rogel begged for a stay of execution in order that he might, with the aid of Alonso as interpreter, instruct the condemned for baptism. When this was done and the ceremony was over they met their doom. Rogel gathered up the few relics of the martyrs and it is said brought them at a later date to Mexico. His mission to the Floridas was over. Returning by way of Santa Elena he made his farewell there. Then he embarked for Havana. By this time his letters had arrived in Rome and in Spain. It is clear that they had conveyed to the general a picture of the hopelessness of the Florida situation under all the adverse circumstances.²⁷

²⁶Kenny, p. 287.

²⁷His letters to his superiors and to Don Juan Hinistrosa, Royal Treasurer at Havana, on the fickleness of the Indians, and what Lanning, p. 58, calls the "niggardly policy of the government," have been used by many who have written on the Florida missions.

CHAPTER IX

ROGEL BECOMES AN EDUCATOR IN MEXICO

The year before St. Francis died Philip II planned a far reaching school system in his American dominions which influenced the whole later life of Father Rogel. These schools were to be in charge of the Jesuit Society and the true Catholic devotion of the king is shown in the following letter to Father López, provincial of Castile, which can be said to have started the Jesuit school system in New Spain.

Venerable and devoted Father Provincial of the Order of the Company of Jesus of the Province of Castile: You are already aware by the account we had of the good life, teaching, and example of the religious persons of the Order, and by some of our cédulas; we beg you and the other provincials of the said order to reside in these kingdoms, that you appoint and name some of its religious to be in some parts of our Indies for the undertaking the instruction and conversion of the natives; and whereas those of them whom you have named have been going to our provinces of Perú and Florida and other parts of the said Indies, where we ordained and commanded that they should reside and occupy themselves in the instruction and catechizing of the natives, we desire now that they go likewise to New Spain and some of the religious occupy themselves in the said fashion, and that the said order be there planted and established; and we trust with this that the Lord will be served for the common good and by it accrue the conversion and teaching of the said Indies. Wherefore we beg and charge you that you soon select and name a dozen of the religious, withal persons of learning, ability, and talents such as seem adequate to you, to journey and pass to the said New Spain and engage themselves and reside in it according to the aforesaid program, and that they go in the flote that is to leave this year for the land, that besides the service you will do in it for our Lord, you will comply with your obligations; and you will give us notice how you do it in order that we may command that

orders be given relative to providing them with all necessary for the voyage. From Madrid, March 1, 1571.

The King.

By the hand of S. M. Antonio de Eraso.¹

To this López replied that the execution of the proposed enterprise would depend on the reception given the idea by the general at Rome. The king, therefore, soon dispatched a courier with a letter for St. Francis, urging diligence and quick execution of the design. Father Francis Borgia heard the petition with incredible joy and promptly assigned Father Sánchez with twelve subjects of Toledo, Castile and Aragon to sail with the flota.

The provincial of the new province soon to be created was worthy of the exalted post. Father Pedro Sánchez, before entering the Society had been a distinguished member of the University of Alcalá, its doctor, professor and rector. He was afterwards at the college of Salamanca. Surely Father Rogel knew him well and he no doubt remembered the young Father who had gone from his university to the Floridas. And now they were to meet again.

The letter from St. Francis Borgia making the appointment reads as follows:

I should wish that the armada which goes to New Spain might give us an opportunity to see Your Reverence before departing; but because my journey will have to be conformed to the itinerary of Cardinal Alexandrino, Legate of the M. C. and to the King of Portugal, with whom His Holiness has commanded me to go, I believe it will be very slow because he is weak; and as the armada is now ready to depart and will presumably sail at the end of August, wherefore

His Majesty by his letter has asked me for twelve subjects, and Your Reverence is one of those whom I have chosen for this new enterprise. Go, my father, with the benediction of our Lord, and if we do not meet on earth, I trust we shall see each other in His Divine Majesty in Heaven. And as quickly as possible, convey to the rest of this province, what I will say here at Seville. Go Your Reverence as superior of all and Provincial of New Spain. May it please the infinite mercy of the Lord to give to all copious grace, that you may reap fruit sixty and a hundredfold. I have sent your patent to Seville. I think that already in Madrid the license will be passed and that which will be necessary. And in order to obtain in Seville your provisions [traveling expenses], baggage and supplies, it will be well to go in time. From Rome July 15 of 1571.

Francisco (Borgia).²

Thus was the Jesuit educational system inaugurated in New Spain. It was to constitute the Province of New Spain. Hence the vice-province of Florida was no more. A few figures show its growth during the next generation. The twelve teachers appointed with Father Sánchez in 1571 had grown in number to 107 by 1580. In 1592 the total in the province was 216 and by the end of the century it had reached 314.³

Father Rogel was conducting the college at Havana when Sánchez and his companions set sail. With his university background as rector at Alcalá and Salamanca, his knowledge of the natives of the New World, and his experience with the college at Havana, certainly Rogel was an ideal subject for the new and scholarly provincial who had come to organize a vast educational system in New Spain. Father Sedeño and Brother Salcedo were sent

²Alegre, I, 47.

³Jacobsen, p. 175.

ahead to Mexico City to prepare accommodations and to await the newcomers.

Father Sánchez and his Black Robes, dusty and travel worn, arrived in Mexico City about nine o'clock in the evening of September 28, 1572, and three days later in Rome, St. Francis Borgia died. With him passed the last hope of converting the Floridas. The land of promise unquestionably lay in New Spain, and the future of Father Rogel lay in the hands of Father Sánchez.

The first headquarters of the Jesuits in Mexico City was located about three blocks northeast of the present cathedral.⁴ The location was a corral, with dilapidated burro sheds and huts of adobe with straw roofs. A sight which must have caused Father Sánchez fresh from the best universities in Spain to shudder. In such humble habitations the Company of Jesus found shelter on its advent into New Spain.

By 1572 the fathers had remodeled their living quarters, had constructed a chapel, and the real work of organizing a great college was begun. The city at this time is estimated to have had a population of 150,000 people, the vast majority of whom were Indians.⁵ There were numerous conventual schools, one college for Indians, and higher education at the University of Mexico.

⁴Ibid., p. 80.

⁵Ibid., p. 88.

Many of the sons of the well-to-do received their elementary education from private tutors. Some were sent annually to Europe.

As soon as the Society of Jesus was established in Mexico City the sons of wealthy families applied for admission, and in due time a college was established for their training. These novices were housed in a building adjoining the religious, and here they went through the training for service that Father Rogel and his companions had endured in Spain so many years before. The expense of such schooling for the boys of the city and the novices was met by gifts from wealthy and influential citizens, each of whom pledged a portion of his wealth to the new foundation. The Jesuits began to teach in 1574. The student enrollment increased and three little seminary colleges were established during the next two years. Then in 1576 the Colegio Máximo of St. Peter and St. Paul was opened with six hundred students.⁶ This was the central foundation of the Jesuits, the hub of all their activities in missions and colleges.

It was not to be expected that the Jesuit fathers during their first few years in the metropolis were impervious to the lure of distant cities.

The mountains which loom about the valley of Mexico were inviting and the bishops and the people in the lands beyond were beckoning. Hence this Jesuit could be found in Pátzcuaro, this one in Valladolid, this one in Vera Cruz and another had the happiness of viewing the old volcanoes, Popocatepetl and the Sleeping Lady from the Puebla side. The provincial

⁶Ibid., p. 113.

himself did not fear to wend his way north and west to the silver outpost of Zacatecas to consider its possibilities for a college site and missionary vantage point.⁷

One by one the system of Jesuit colleges was established in the New World until toward the end of colonial times, 1767, the Jesuits were suppressed and banished from the land. By that time they had built and maintained education in twenty-eight colleges and universities.⁸ Helping at the very beginning of this great enterprise was Rogel for shortly after the establishment of the Jesuits in Mexico, he had been summoned by his new provincial Sánchez. Rogel remained in Havana during the year 1572, endearing himself to the people by his ministrations. Sedeño soon rejoined him, coming from Mexico. In 1573, since all the help possible was needed in Mexico City, Sánchez called them both to the capital of New Spain for teaching and religious work. And thus it was that Rogel saw the land of the Aztecs for the first time. He and his companion left Havana in spite of the protests of the people.⁹ There is little information about Rogel's activities in Mexico for the two years of 1573 to 1575, but it is clear that after their departure the officials and people of the town tried to get them to return. Supplications went to the king, Philip II, telling of the virtue of the fathers, of the need the city had for their preaching, example and education.¹⁰

⁷Ibid., p. 122.

⁸Herbert E. Bolton, Rim of Christendom (New York, 1936), p. 14.

⁹Alegre, I, 65.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 66.

Philip was bent upon helping the people of Havana and hence a letter came from him to Mexico which was almost a command for the Jesuits' return to Havana. As a consequence of this Juan Rogel once more had to pack his meagre kit and with two brothers wend his way down to Vera Cruz to take a boat for Havana.¹¹ A great demonstration awaited them. And they continued their ministerial work where they had left off. But it was one thing to be kindly disposed toward the fathers and another to fulfill promises to support them and their work. The king did not send promised funds for building and school nor did the wealthier people contribute and the poor could not. The result of this was that in 1575 Pedro Sánchez ordered the residence closed. And once more Rogel with the others had to return to Mexico City.¹² There we lose sight of him for another short period. Writers were more interested in the opening of the big Jesuit college than in individuals.

The fame of the Jesuit schools spread across New Spain. Many towns desired seminaries under Jesuit direction and the provincial had many requests for teachers. From Oaxaca, two hundred and fifty miles south of the capital, came the canon of the Holy Cathedral, Don Antonio de Santa Cruz.¹³ He was a man of wealth and importance in his community; a man of pious spirit who had

¹¹ibid., p. 80.

¹²ibid., p. 81.

¹³Jacobsen, p. 231.

noticed and admired the Jesuits whom he observed in the capital. They seemed to him apostolic men whose establishment in Oaxaca would be of much utility to the city. Word soon passed to the provincial that the canon would like to found a Jesuit college in Oaxaca.¹⁴

Before the Jesuits could accept his proffered foundation it was necessary to visit the locality and determine the suitability of the project. A council was held among the Jesuits, and it is not surprising that Father Rogel and another Jesuit, Father Diego López, were sent on a tour of inspection through the fertile country to the south, whose principal city, Oaxaca, third city in Mexico, was located on the main caravan route between Acapulco and Vera Cruz. It was a ten-day ride from Mexico City through a hilly, well-watered region. Five hundred Spaniards lived in the city and some three or four thousand more dwelt in the surrounding valleys among four hundred thousand Indians.

As the Fathers approached the town the citizens came out in a great procession and met them with rejoicing, escorting them down the main street. Canon de Santa Cruz presented the religious with suitable residences and secured the country for additional funds for the foundation.¹⁵

At once Rogel and López began to exercise themselves in the ministries. Not having a church of their own, they heard

¹⁴Rivas, I, 111.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 112.

confessions and preached in the Cathedral. Many people gathered for the services and much good was accomplished. Rich citizens began to contribute large alms, offering to care for the missionary's every need. This success caused a jealous protest from one member of the Dominican Order who had been established in the city for some fifty years. Bishop Alburquerque of Oaxaca, himself a Dominican was influenced to excommunicate the Jesuits and put a stop to their teaching. At first Rogel and López were serenely surprised, for they knew that the edict lacked authority as far as they were concerned. But more distressing news soon reached their ears. It was rumored that the bishop intended to eject them with physical force. A day was set for the untoward act, which might have succeeded had it not been for a band of armed citizens who surrounded the Jesuits' residences.¹⁶

While the missionaries were in this precarious state Father López, leaving Rogel in a most embarrassing position, returned to Mexico City and appealed to the archbishop and the viceroy, who promptly sent letters which fixed the Jesuit establishment without question. However, the dispute seems to have intimidated Canon de Santa Cruz who immediately repented his foundation and withdrew his donation of houses and lots. Rogel was now beyond the embarrassing position and in a decided predicament. When things seemed darkest word came by courier from the archbishop of Mexico and from the viceroy that the Jesuits were privileged by the Pope and by themselves to build or own property any place.

¹⁶Rivas, I, 112.

As though to make up for his original inhospitality, Bishop Alburquerque now offered better houses situated within five hundred feet of the cathedral, and on his site the future Jesuit college arose.¹⁷ Rogel was easily reconciled. Unfortunately Father López never returned and it is probable that Rogel never saw him again. He was taken ill in Mexico and died shortly afterward in a plague. Rogel, being on the scene was appointed Rector, and as such had to set about building and organising a school. Donations were made and the school was called San Juan by Rogel, probably in honor of his patron saint. In September of 1575 it opened its doors to students of reading and writing for the smallest boys, Latin grammar and moral theology for the older boys and seminarians. The college was divided into two sections, one part for seminarians and one for lay students.¹⁸ The school flourished exceedingly until the time of the Jesuit expulsion.

Just how long Father Rogel remained in Oaxaca is uncertain. The school which he helped found there had a distinguished career, and the city itself became one of the most noteworthy in all Mexico. To travelers three hundred and fifty years later Oaxaca was pointed out as the boyhood home of Benito Juárez, the Mexican patriot, and Porfirio Díaz whose long term in the presidency in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century witnessed the greatest material development known to the republic.

¹⁷Jacobsen, p. 155.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 234.

CHAPTER X

VERA CRUZ - THE TRUE CROSS

Few records have been preserved which deal with the life of Father Rogel during the quarter of a century that transpired between the founding of the college of Oaxaca and his death. We presume that he remained for several years as Rector of the College and of the Seminary of San Juan, as was customary among Jesuits. Then from his superiorship he was returned to the ranks. It was a period during which much building was done by the Society of Jesus in New Spain, and there was a great amount of missionary work among the Indians, especially those of the northeast coast around Sinaloa.

Rogel had traveled much in the lands of the New World and had been in many perils on sea and land. Such things were apparently taken for granted in the lives of the fathers. So too was his attempt to found a college in Havana and his success in founding one in Oaxaca. He was not considered a failure for the outcome of the first of these enterprises, as may be concluded from the fact that he was given positions of trust and responsibility in other undertakings. In his later life, it is true, little is heard of his work, but little is heard of the work of many other Jesuits. He became then during these later years a typical member of the order, just as he had been all

along. He was not martyred, nor was he exalted to high dignities. It is known, however, that this "valorous soldier of the militia of Christ,"¹ was instrumental in founding another Jesuit college in the city of Vera Cruz, the important harbor of New Spain. And the story of the last years of the life of Father Juan Rogel must be gleaned in great part from Father Andrés Pérez de Rivas, who came to that port as a young father when Rogel was old, and who because of his writings and missionary work and position as provincial was one of the very important Jesuits of his time.

The Jesuits began to be known in Vera Cruz in the year 1572. On first stepping into the New World, Pedro Sánchez and his followers were given warm hospitality by the people of the port and were invited to return. Other Jesuits passed through on their way to Mexico and they too were welcomed. In 1578 and 1579 letters were written to Sánchez asking him to send some fathers there and telling him that the citizens would establish a house for them.² But nothing could be done during the time Sánchez was provincial. However when Father Díaz succeeded him, Fathers Rogel and Alonso Guillén were chosen for that post, and they probably established themselves in the city in 1580. Rogel had just finished his term as rector at Oaxaca.³ This was

¹Rivas, II, 211.

²Alegre, I, 148.

³Ibid., p. 149.

another dangerous mission for Rogel, for Vera Cruz was almost constantly scourged by fevers, plagues, and pirates.

A house was allotted to the Jesuits at the mouth of the river in the most unhealthy part of the town, where the yellow fever bearing mosquitoes swarmed.⁴ But the fathers went about their work zealously, hearing confessions of arriving and departing sailors and immigrants. Soon the citizens saw the fathers' inconveniences and began building a fine residence and church for them on higher ground in the most healthy part of the city. Regularly the Jesuits had to make trips across the water to the island fortress of San Juan de Ulúa where there was a hospital and garrison.

Rogel's work was manifold. He was the chaplain for the soldiers and sailors and people of the hospital. He and Guillén were the pastors of the city. They visited the prisons and the poor. And at times Rogel ministered to the soldiers who were sent to defend the coast against ravaging pirates or the hostile Indians. Thus in 1596, when William Parker the buccaneer was hovering around the coast of Yucatán near Campeche, two hundred soldiers were ordered to the coast to defend it. Rogel and the fathers volunteered to act as chaplains.⁵ The citizens were quick to recognize his valor, even though the expedition did not

⁴Ibid., p. 173.

⁵Ibid., pp. 349-350.

materialize because the Spanish men-of-war arrived in time to drive away the freebooters. Rogel's bravery did not stop there. He was frequently among those afflicted with the fever and thus constantly risked his life.

This ancient of seventy years endured all the hardships of the apostolic life, taking care of the men from the galleons; he lived on the island of San Juan, preached constantly and confessed all the men of the sea Father Rogel with the activity of a youth assisted all, consoled the sick, preached to the well, confessed the penitent, aided the dying, with a joy and speed that was astounding.⁶

Father Perez de Rivas wrote of him:

So resplendent were the rays of his heroic virtues, so ardent [his] zeal for souls, so filled with fruit his fiery words and fervent spirit, that in a short time they credited him with sanctity and he won from all a singular estimation and veneration. There was no personal work nor difficulty which could impede the fulfillment of his apostolic ministry to his neighbors, no matter how laborous this occupation grew, his most pleasant and sweet recreation and the most savory and seasoned food of his soul, that it seemed as though he nourished himself on incommunities, vigils and all kinds of fatigues, spending days and nights almost entirely without sleep; confessing, teaching, catechizing and talking to the lowly and rude people, obligating himself to instruct the most vile slaves and searching out the same with singular diligence and holy artifices.⁷

When the treasure fleets called at Vera Cruz during these years Father Rogel visited the boats and went the rounds of all the rude sailors.

He exhorted them with such efficacious words to confessions, and gained them with such great mildness and skill that all

⁶Ibid., p. 350.

⁷Rivas, II, 214.

without exception went to the holy sacrament of penance to have their souls cleansed from sin as to a fount of saving waters which communicated life to the sinners.⁸

Even after he became old and infirm his zeal never seems to have flagged, and many accounts have been preserved of his holy work. The following account from Father Rivas is an example:

Another time they asked for a father from the church to hear the confessions of the sick, and Rogel though tortured by one of his terrible headaches which made it impossible for him to work, offered to perform the exercise of charity, and made the journey of five leagues from old Vera Cruz to the port, without being able to take any food or drink any wine.⁹

These examples of the sweetness of Father Rogel's character contrast oddly with his surroundings. Vera Cruz was considered the pesthole of the gulf area. Subject to earthquakes, epidemics and tornadoes, there was probably no worse place in all Mexico to live, yet Father Rogel resided there until he was ninety years old. The hurricanes were often followed by tidal waves which sometimes inundated the city. It was not unusual for ships to be torn from their moorings and wrecked on the shore. In 1601, when Father Rogel was in the city, there was a storm which wrecked fourteen vessels with immensely rich cargoes, and more than a thousand men lost their lives.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., p. 214.

⁹Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁰C. E. Chapman, Colonial Hispanic America (New York, 1933), p. 132.

When the winds did not prevail a new terror took the city. From May to November was the usual period for the black vomit. Malaria and yellow fever were rampant. As late as 1841 it was reported that one sixth of the entire population of Vera Cruz died in a single year.¹¹ During epidemics it was a rare day in which three or four Spaniards were not buried.¹²

When the city was not being devastated by the elements and disease, pirate hordes might loot its streets. John Hawkins fought his famous battle in the harbor in 1568 and in 1573 Francis Drake captured the city. In later years many freebooters of many nationalities sacked the unfortunate metropolis.

Fires ravished the city in 1606 and again in 1608.¹³ But despite all these plagues the city continued to prosper. By 1618 it was hastily rebuilt, mostly of wood and in December of that year a fire broke out in the barracks, the flames spreading under a north wind, consumed the best part of the city, destroying property reckoned at over two million pesos.¹⁴

Within a year the city was burned again. The convents of Santo Domingo and of La Merced were destroyed. For a time it seemed as though the Jesuit houses would be spared but

eight barrels of gunpowder which were burning in the house of a merchant sent sparks from the roof, flying in all

¹¹Brantz Mayer, Mexico as It Was (New York, 1844), p. 8.

¹²H. H. Bancroft, Works, III, 757.

¹³Ibid., n. 211.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 27.

directions, and these brought the fire to the Jesuit house and church, where it was fanned by a strong north wind with such violence that nothing could be saved except the Blessed Sacrament and Father Rogel, who because of his advanced age of ninety years had to be carried in the arms of two Jesuits and placed in the home of an honored citizen. On this occasion the citizens gave a great demonstration of the old and solid appreciation which they had for the Jesuits. They soon prepared a temporary house for them commenced to rebuild Father Rogel had to remain in the house of an old penitent of his out of attention to his age, which would not permit such movings. The fathers went daily to visit him, because the ancient religious might not be acquainted in that distant house. On the eighteenth day they observed that he went through the house with an extraordinary joy and with the countenance of an angel.¹⁵

Seated to eat with his host at table, he suddenly raised himself from the chair and

extending his hands, lifted his eyes to Heaven, and turning them afterward toward the benefactor who had sheltered him, with a beaming countenance, as though thanking him for the good which he had received from him, without speaking a word or showing any sentiment or anxiety, he closed his eyes to this mortal life and those of his soul were opened to gaze on the immortal and glorious; the repose which his labors merited and the premium which his heroic virtues obtained.¹⁶

In death he retained a beautiful and joyful appearance inspiring all who saw him. The bells were tolled in the greater church of Vera Cruz and the other convents. The confraternities gathered with their wax tapers for the burial which was attended by the most notable people of the land and sea. The body was deposited in the Major Church, since after the fire the Jesuits had no place of their own, and the obsequies were observed with pomp and solemnity.

¹⁵Alegre, II, 115.

¹⁶Rivas, II, 213.

Born shortly after a monumental battle and dying shortly after a devastating conflagration, Juan Regel had lived through almost a century of strife and bloodshed with simplicity, humility and service for the greater glory of God. The account of this notable Jesuit may well be closed with the tribute paid to him by Alegre, who says after describing the burning of the city:

The loss in the city was valued at more than two millions, but with all this what has been felt as a greater loss is that of such an apostolic man as Juan Regel, and one of such rare virtue and sanctity that he may be numbered among the most notable whom the Society has ever had.¹⁷

¹⁷Alegre, loc. cit.

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